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ChopTalk

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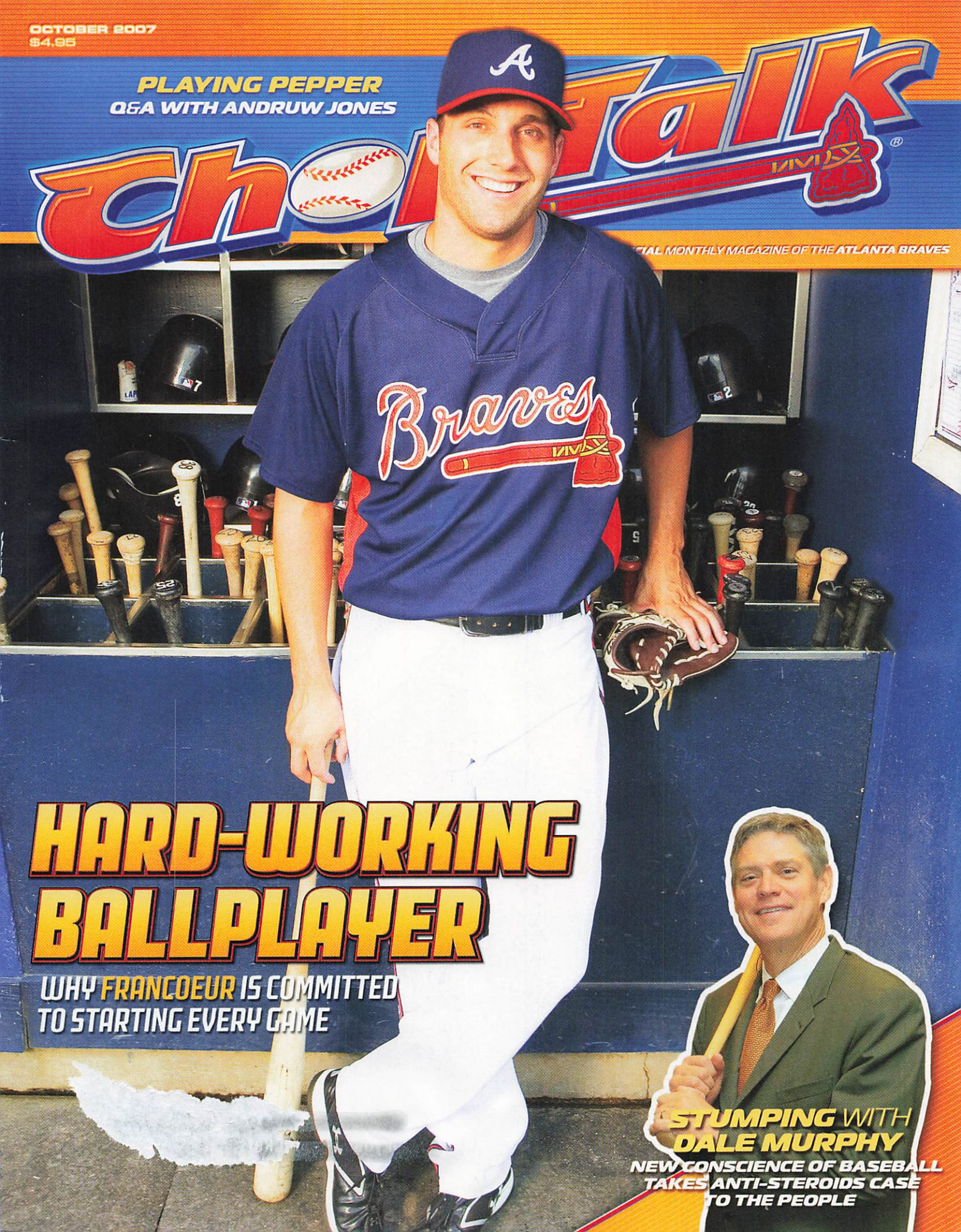

HARD-WORKING BALLPLAYER

WHY FRANCOEUR IS COMMITTED TO STARTING EVERY GAME

STUMPING WITH DALE MURPHY

NEW CONSCIENCE OF BASEBALL TAKES ANTI-STEROIDS CASE TO THE PEOPLE

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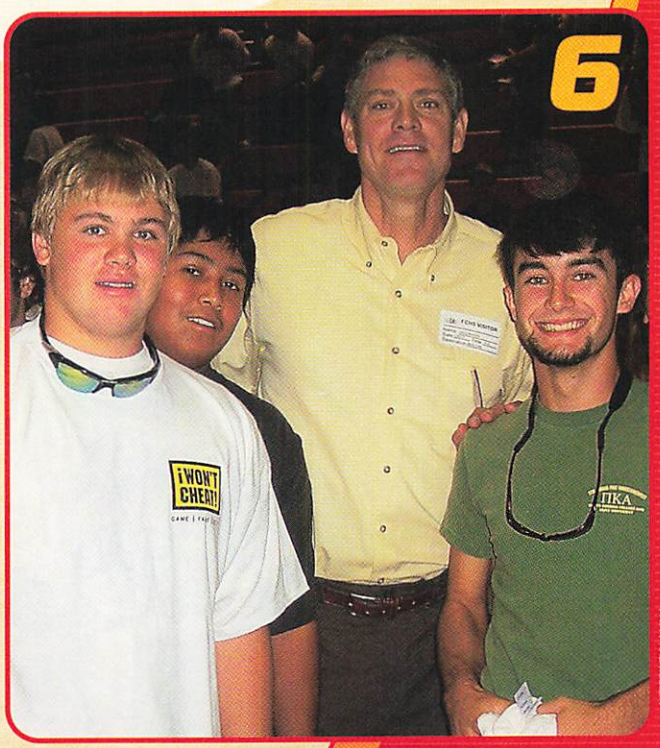

PATTY RASMUSSEN

ALLISON SHIRREFFS

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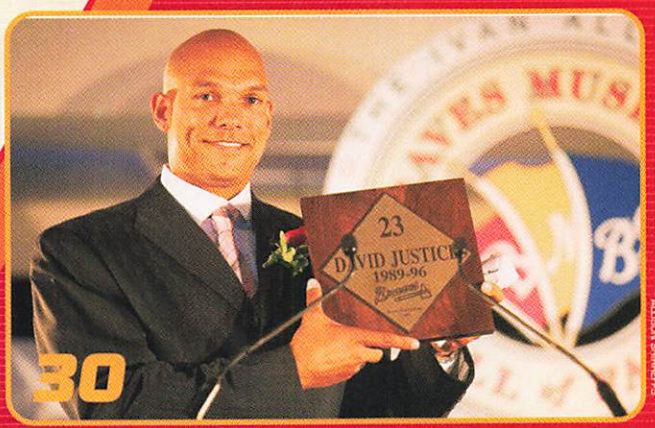

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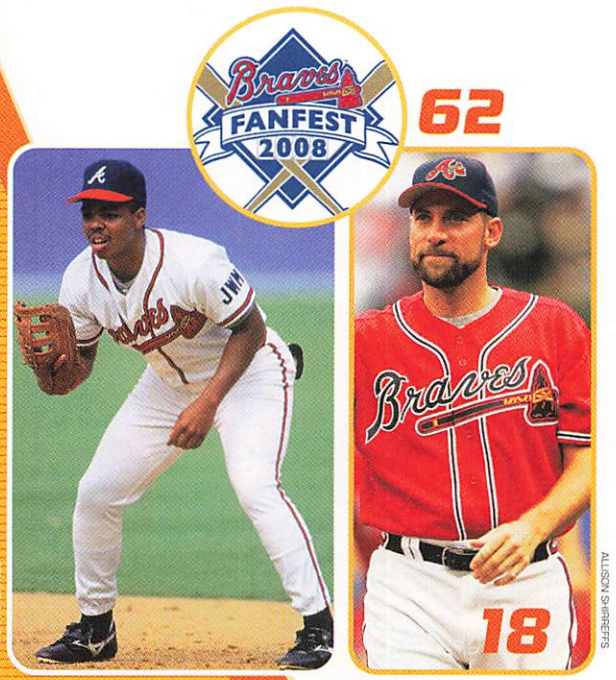

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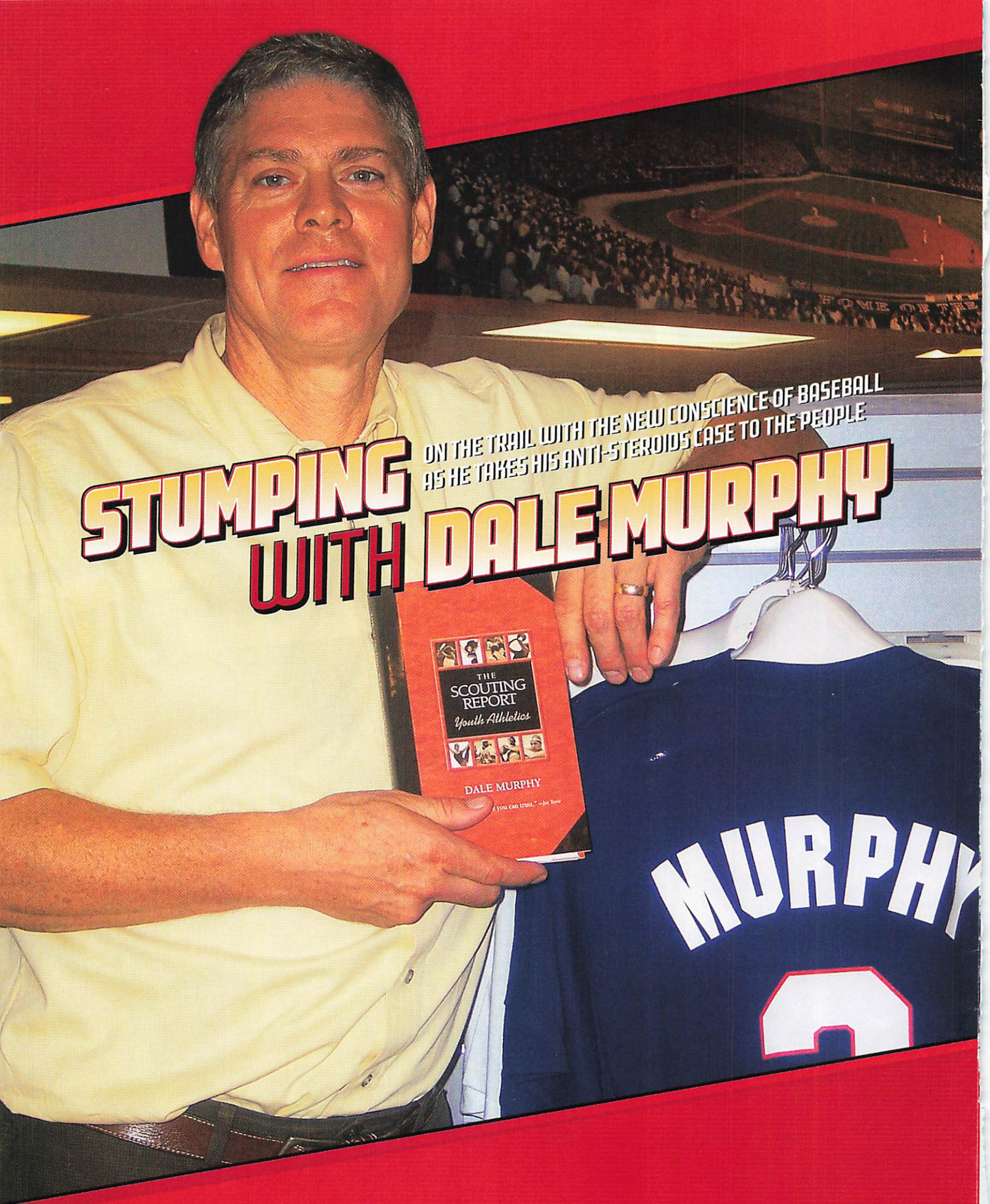


STUMPING WITH DALE MURPHY

ON THE TRAIL WITH THE NEW CONSCIENCE OF BASEBALL AS HE TAKES HIS ANTI-STEROIDS CASE TO THE PEOPLE

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL has a conscience, and his name is Dale Murphy. Remembered by baseball fans as the back-to-back National League MVP in 1982 and 1983, Murphy was the Atlanta Braves franchise icon of the 1980s, a five-time Gold Glove outfielder and a power hitter who held the Atlanta record for home runs (371) before Chipper Jones broke it this summer.

But it's Murphy's squeaky clean image, on and off the field, which perfectly positioned him to speak out as few players can about the scourge of steroids and other banned substances in baseball.

"I don't mind calling (steroid use) what it is - cheating," said Murphy when he was in Atlanta Sept. 4-6, making appearances and signing books. "It's illegal, there are health issues, especially for young people, but there's the integrity of the game and the statistics of the game that are also impacted."

So this summer, while millions of baseball fans and non-fans watched San Francisco Giants leftfielder Barry Bonds break Hank Aaron's all-time home run record, some of the harshest criticism came from the unlikeliest source - Murphy, who's never wanted to speak a negative word about anything in the past, but now is tackling a major health, moral and social issue head-on.

While a guest on an Aug. 6 sports talk radio program, 1280 The Show, in Salt Lake City, Utah, Murphy said, "Barry's a great player, there's no question about it. But he put an asterisk by his name on his own. He's deserved all the negative publicity that he's getting. I've heard the last few weeks, that he's being treated unfairly. You know, life just usually isn't like that. You don't usually get treated unfairly. You usually get what you deserve.

"This is what Barry deserves. He's a hard guy to like. He's a hard teammate to have and, you know, he's set a terrible example for our kids."

Strong words, certainly, but Murphy stands by them.

"I was frustrated because a father had called in (on the radio program) saying, 'I'm going to have my son watch (Bonds). It's not that big a deal. I'm going to explain to him that he's a very good player and he's going to break the record,'" recalled Murphy.

"I was amazed. I thought, 'That's crazy!' Here we had a dad call and say it's not a big deal and I said, 'Yeah it is a big deal. It's a great opportunity to teach kids why you're *not* interested in what (Bonds) is achieving, because it's tainted.' This isn't a Barry Bonds issue, but he's become the lightning rod that gives you a chance to talk about the issue."

That moment further cemented Murphy's desire to spread the message of his I Won't Cheat Foundation, which began in January, evolving from a booklet for youth, "Let's Talk," that's part of his book, "The Scouting Report: Youth Athletics."

"We narrowed our focus to try to help kids make good decisions," said Murphy. "The foundation is a way to get the book and booklet out there on a wider scale than just selling them in a bookstore."

New to the foundation business, Murphy is assisted by a group of friends from Alpine, Utah, a moderate-sized city where the 51-year-old Murphy lives with his wife, Nancy and three of their eight children.

PATTY RASMUSSEN

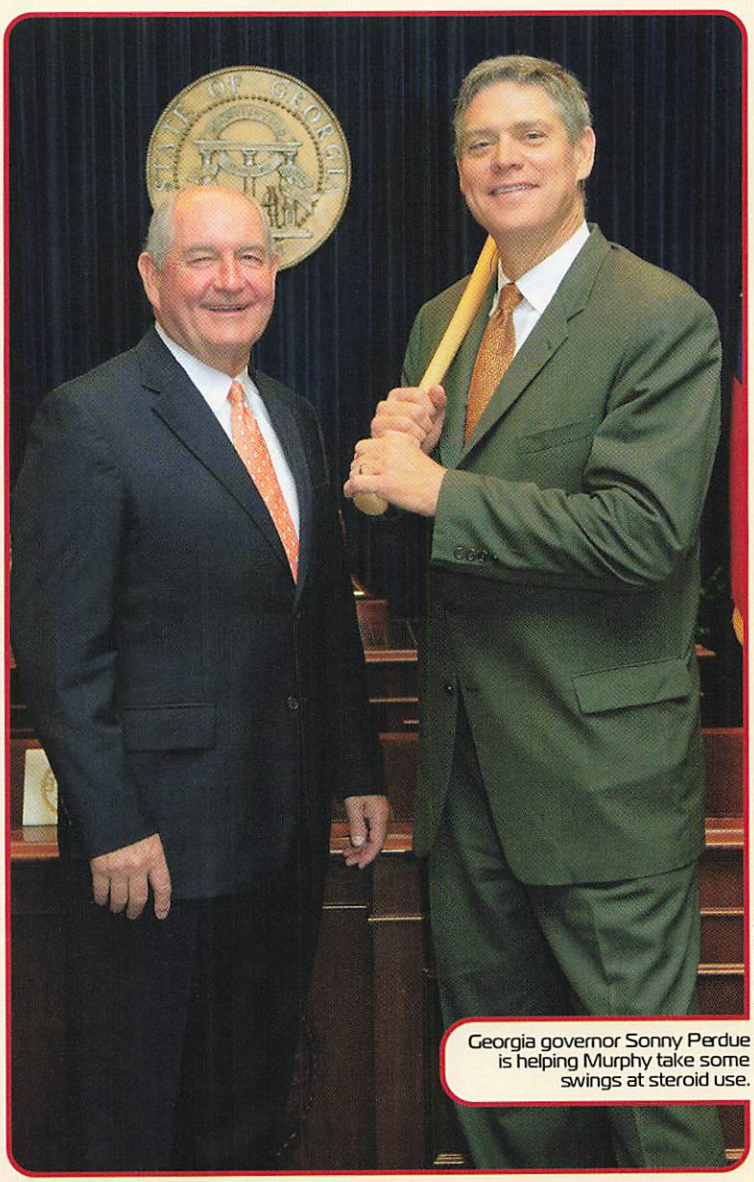
"We're still learning the ropes," said Murphy, who, as chief executive officer of the foundation, was to make a presentation at the end of September before the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) Annual Meeting in New York City. The CGI is an international organization comprised of some of the world's wealthiest individuals, corporations and nations. The CGI links foundations with appropriate donors. Murphy might have at least one member of the CGI already in his corner. Former Braves owner Ted Turner is a featured attendee at this years' CGI Annual Meeting.

The goal of the 'I Won't Cheat' Foundation is simple: "To leave the game better than we found it."

To Murphy that means cleaning it up, and he sees only one way to do that: Zero tolerance.

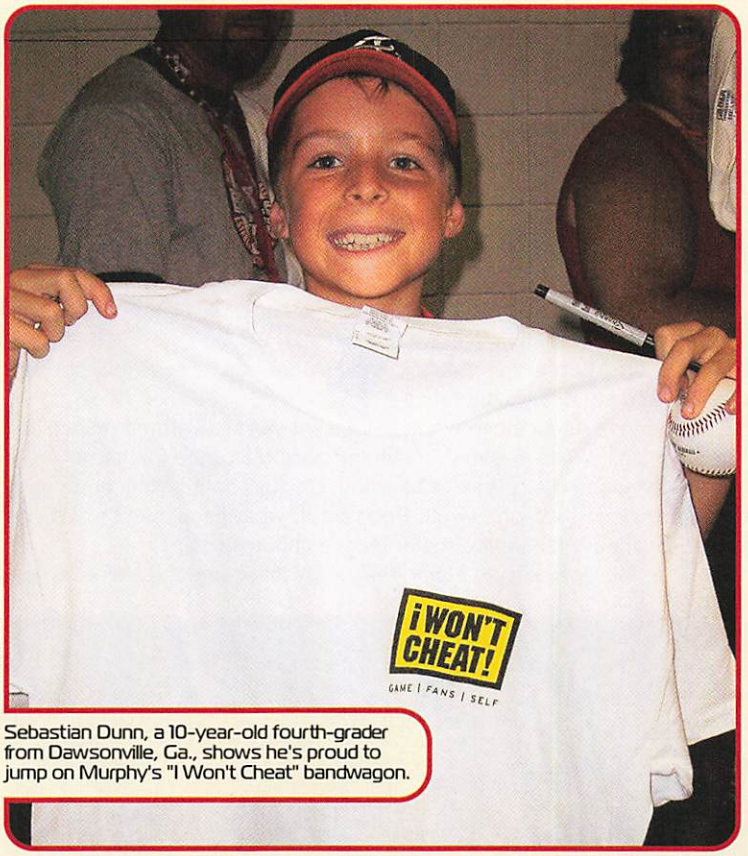
"We know it can work, because it worked with gambling," he said. "When baseball instituted zero tolerance for gambling, it changed the culture of baseball. Do guys do it? Well, apparently they do. But when Pete Rose did it, what happened to him? He will not ever wear a major league uniform again."

Murphy believes Major League Baseball and the Major League



TYNA DUCKETT

Georgia governor Sonny Perdue is helping Murphy take some swings at steroid use.



PATTY RASMUSSEN

Sebastian Dunn, a 10-year-old fourth-grader from Dawsonville, Ga., shows he's proud to jump on Murphy's "I Won't Cheat" bandwagon.

Baseball Player's Association need to address steroids in the same way, banning players immediately after the first positive test.

"Zero tolerance would send a message to athletes and especially young players that they're serious about it," he said. "I believe it would change the culture, almost overnight, though it's probably a few years away."

For now, Murphy is focused on getting the 'I Won't Cheat' message out through book signings, speeches and other appearances. And he spent several days in the metro Atlanta area, doing just that.

Murphy and his "posse" - Marty Haws, Jason Schwarz and Greg Schwarz, arrived in Atlanta a little after midnight Sept. 4 and set up their home base at the Westin Hotel in the Buckhead section of Atlanta. Marty, Jason and Greg are friends of Murphy's from Utah helping with the foundation operations. Their task included hauling around oversized rolling suitcases filled with extra copies of 'The Scouting Report,' 'Let's Talk,', and 'I Won't Cheat' t-shirts to hand out at speaking engagements.

After just four hours of sleep, Murphy's whirlwind agenda started with a 7 a.m. television interview for Good Day Utah after which Murphy and his gang headed to Centennial High School in nearby Roswell, Ga., for a 10:30 a.m. school assembly. Returning to his hotel at 12:30, Murphy met with ChopTalk for an hour-long interview before heading to Turner Field where he was interviewed by Ted Hall, an anchorman for the local NBC affiliate.

At 4 p.m., Murphy sat down in the ballpark's auxiliary clubhouse with Fox Sports Network's (FSN) Ray Goodrich, who asked Murphy questions for a segment called, "In My Own Words," which aired in the following weeks. The FSN interview wrapped up at 4:45, and Murphy hustled to the Hank Aaron Room where more local print and television media lined up for their interviews.

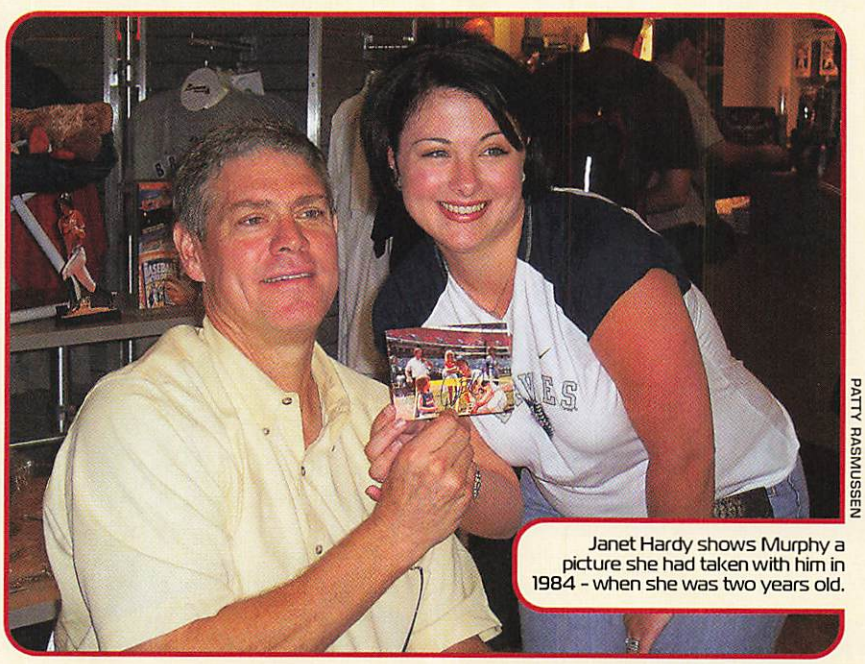
Meanwhile, a line of fans formed outside the Hank Aaron Room for a book-signing fundraiser. Murphy's book was sold for $20, with the proceeds split between the Atlanta Braves Foundation and the I Won't Cheat Foundation. Fans who donated an additional $20 could have another item signed.

Season ticket holders got first crack at Murphy during a special one-hour signing, which started at 5:30. When the doors opened, fans streamed inside the Aaron room where Murphy sat behind a table and smiled, signed, chatted, and posed for pictures until 6:30 when he took a quick break to run down to the Braves clubhouse to meet with Bobby Cox and other friends.

He returned at 7 o'clock, and the snaking line of fans broke into a cheer as he entered the room. Murphy greeted strangers and old friends alike, signing books for another 45 minutes before he walked to the television booth for an in-game interview with broadcasters Joe Simpson and Jon Sciambi. Finally, over 12 hours after his day started, Murphy and his colleagues went back to their hotel to rest for the next day's appearances.

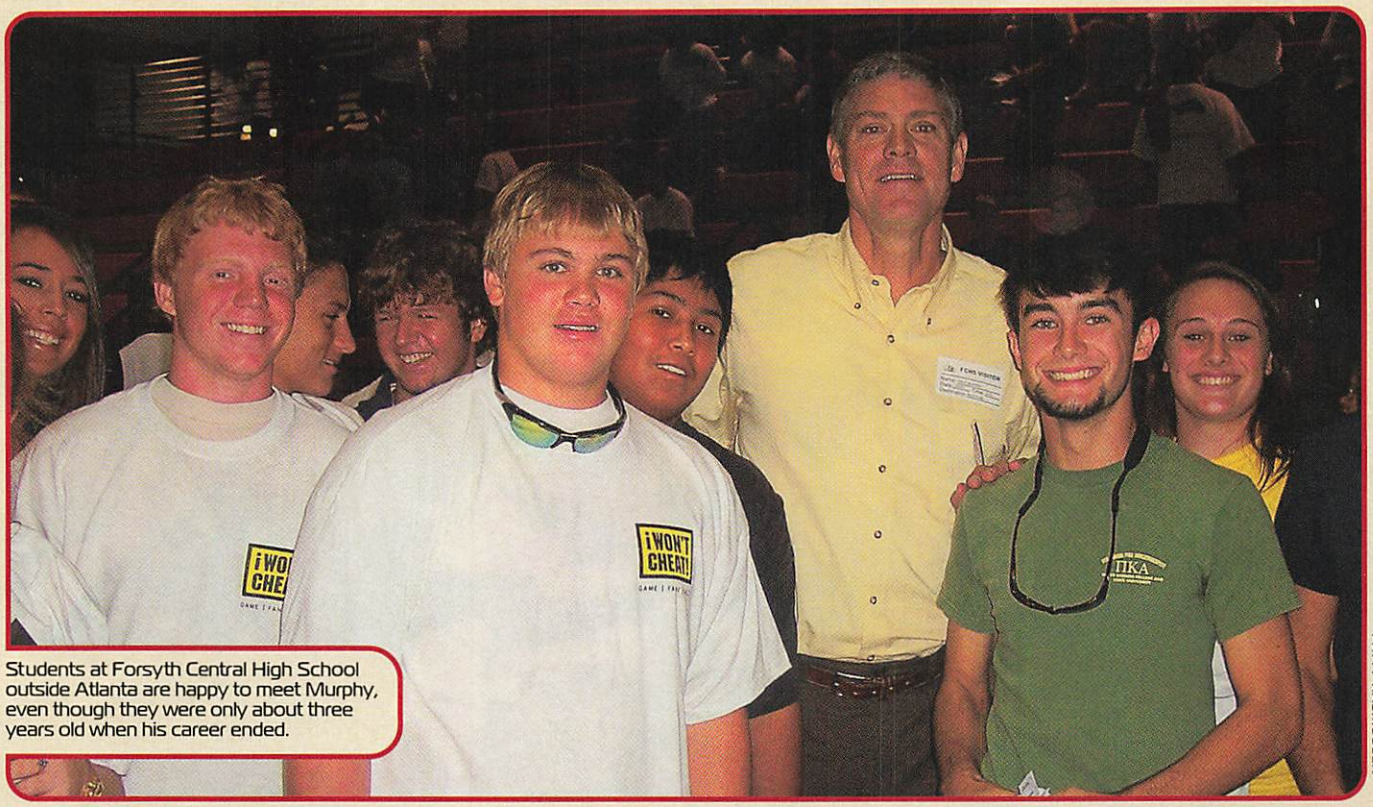
At 9:40 a.m., Murphy strode into the gym at Forsyth Central High School, about 30 miles north of Atlanta. After greeting Jerry Cauley, the school's athletic director, Murphy was introduced to about 200 students who gave him an enthusiastic round of applause in spite of the fact that most were just three years old when his baseball career ended in 1993. The students listened attentively as Murphy launched into his talk.

"My message here today is a challenge," he said. "You may be faced with a decision to use steroids, and I'm telling you it's wrong. Whether academically or athletically, make sure it's you that's competing. Whatever you do in life, you don't have to cheat to get there."



PATTY RASMUSSEN

Janet Hardy shows Murphy a picture she had taken with him in 1984 - when she was two years old.



Students at Forsyth Central High School outside Atlanta are happy to meet Murphy, even though they were only about three years old when his career ended.

PATTY RASMUSSEN

He showed portions of a taped interview with Dr. Bruce Woolsey, a university professor in pharmacology, about the short- and long-term health risks associated with taking steroids, and then concluded with a few more personal comments.

Students received "I Won't Cheat" t-shirts and "Let's Talk" booklets at the end of his speech. He signed autographs and posed for photos and even spent some one-on-one time talking with the school's coaching staff before departing for his next stop, a noon book signing at the Braves Clubhouse Store at the CNN Center in downtown Atlanta.

The line began forming at 11 a.m., and store clerks replenished the book stock at least once before Murphy took his place at the signing table. Once again, he cordially signed books for approximately 200 fans, including a tall African-American man who handed his book to Murphy saying, "Bobby Hill."

> **"HE (BARRY BONDS) PUT AN ASTERISK BY HIS NAME ON HIS OWN... THIS IS WHAT BARRY DESERVES... HE'S SET A TERRIBLE EXAMPLE FOR OUR KIDS."**

Murphy looked up, his eyes widened and he said, "Oh, my goodness!" Hill and Murphy were on the Wilson High School baseball team in Portland, Oregon, in the early 1970s. Hill now lives in Atlanta where he is an executive at UPS.

"Dale was just a little bit better than I was," joked Hill, who said he wasn't surprised to learn of Murphy's stand on steroids. "He's doing the right thing."

Another fan, Janet Hardy, brought a photo taken of herself with Murphy at a fan day in 1984 when she was two-years-old. Murphy looked at the photo and quipped, "That was a long time ago, but it's good to see you again!"

After the line finally tapered off, Murphy conducted several more interviews before he and his crew once again headed north of the city for more book signings at two separate Barnes & Noble Bookstores, one in Marietta where he signed for approximately 75 fans and the other in Alpharetta where he signed for close to 60 fans. He remained at the store until every autograph request was accommodated.

The next morning, Murphy met with Georgia governor Sonny Perdue at 8:30 a.m. The 20-minute visit gave Murphy the opportunity to thank the governor in person for contributing comments about his experience with sports and his views about steroid use to both the I Won't Cheat website (iwontcheat.com) and the "Let's Talk" brochure. After the brief meeting with the governor, Murphy was on his way home to Utah.

In less than 72 hours while he was in Atlanta, Murphy was able to personally connect with close to 400 high school students, teachers and coaches, hundreds of fans who stood patiently to meet him, and, via television and radio, hundreds of thousands of fans watching and listening to his message.

"Our goal is to get this message in front of 5 million kids in the next 36 months," he said. To that end, Murphy will speak to a conference of the Western Region High School Athletic Directors, in Park City, Utah, in the upcoming months, and the National Baseball Hall of Fame - where he so far has failed to gain induction - contacted him about speaking to their convention of youth coaches.

That Murphy is taking time away from his own retirement is not an issue for him.

"I feel strongly about this," he said. "We need a culture change, and like I say in my talk to kids, you can't take shortcuts."

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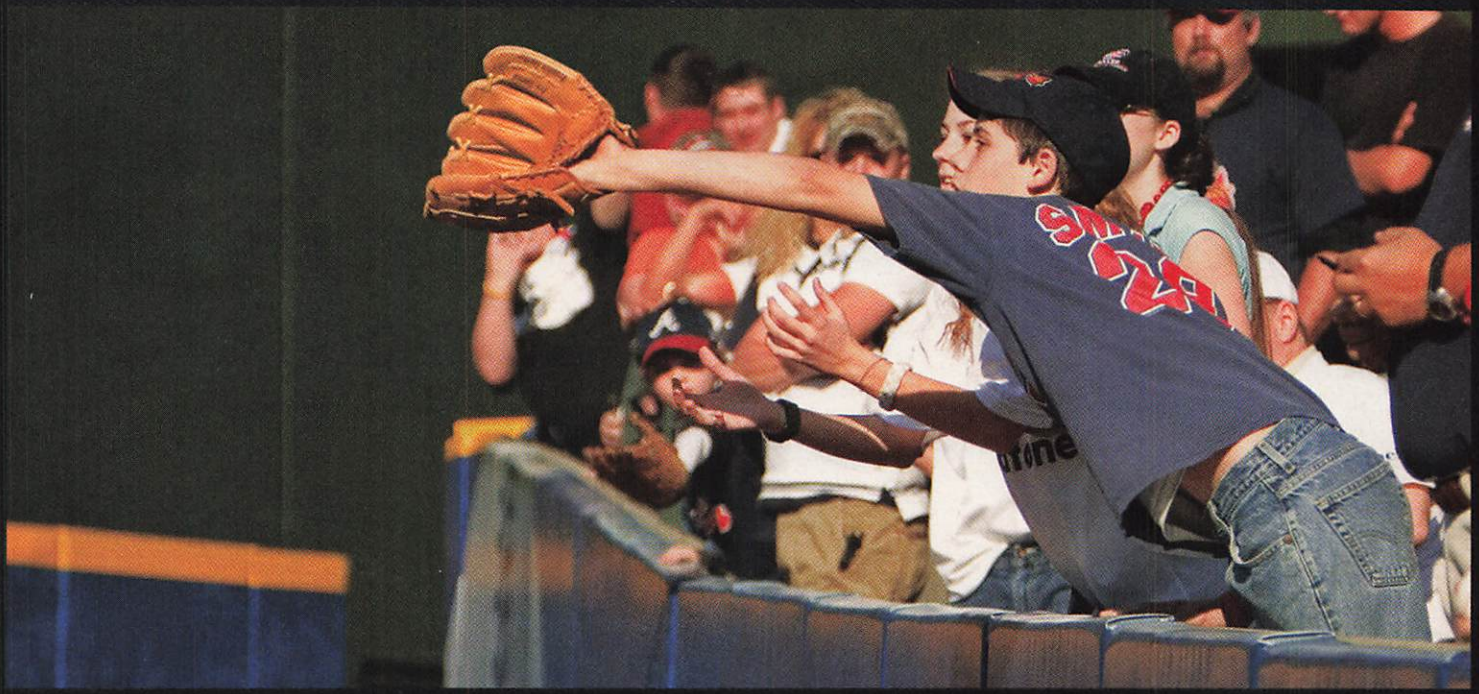

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PAINTING THE CORNERS

BY JAY BUSBEE

THE SOMBER BALLAD OF A BACKUP CATCHER

IT WAS THE LATE SPRING OF 2005. The Braves had put up some solid early-season win totals, but they were falling back to the pack. When Johnny Estrada went down with an injury, they dipped into the farm system and brought up a promising catcher, a burly kid with a smooth swing. The rookie made an immediate impact in the majors, and he appeared positioned for a long career behind the plate in Atlanta.

And then, one month later, another guy, Brian McCann, got called up from the minors, and for that first kid - Brayan Pena - nothing's been the same since.

Pena's been one of the lost men of the Baby Braves of 2005, a rookie who made an instant splash but quickly lost the media spotlight to McCann, Jeff Francoeur and Kelly Johnson. He's bounced back and forth between Atlanta and Richmond since then.

As 2007 opened, Pena appeared to have the backup catching spot nailed down. Unfortunately, his season received a dizzying interruption when he got his bell rung on the follow-through of a swing by the Phillies' Greg Dobbs in May. Placed on the DL with a concussion and later sent back to Richmond, Pena initially struggled to regain his stroke.

"After the concussion, I was trying to get my confidence back," he said. "This year was one of the toughest for me. You want to feel good, and it's difficult to play when you don't."

He eventually righted the ship at Richmond, hitting .301 over 94 games and earning a late-season callup to Atlanta.

But Pena also learned firsthand that there can be frustration with a September callup. He played most of the season with playoff-bound Richmond, but he wasn't around to help their bid to reach the Promised Land.

Days before the International League playoffs, Pena got the call to come south. The needs of the big league club supersede those of its minor league teams, and thus Pena was summoned to ride the bench while his former team played its post-season.

"I feel we had a great team down there," Pena said in Atlanta just before the R-Braves' playoffs began. "Everybody's so united. I really miss them, but I feel like they have the confidence they can win it all. My prayers are with them."

ALLISON SHIRREFFS

Brayan Pena's season received a dizzying interruption in May when he was hit in the head with a bat.

But does he wish he was with them?

"Part of me does, sure," he said, but then motioned at the expanse of Turner Field on a beautiful September afternoon. "But this is a good place."

Even when that place is the bench.

It's a tantalizing yet unfulfilling role, the backup catching spot. It's a guaranteed start once a week or so - even a stalwart like McCann needs an off day now and then - but only that. So that leaves the reserve catcher in a vaguely connected state, a necessary but not essential piece of the team puzzle.

"It's tough, playing only once or twice a week," said bullpen coach Eddie Perez, a longtime backup to Javy Lopez. "You've got to keep in shape, you've got to watch the game, and you've got to not try to do too much when you do get in. You can't get two hits in one at-bat, and that's what a lot of guys try to do after they've been sitting awhile."

The Braves have demonstrated, in the most visible way possible, that they're committed to McCann for the long term, signing him to a multiyear contract and dealing Jarrod Saltalamacchia, their most highly regarded prospect, because he played the same position.

Though he's only 25, Pena's seen the writing on the wall - in 10-foot-high letters - and consequently has tested his skills in the outfield and at third and first while at Richmond. Anything to keep the dream alive.

"My main thing is just trying to help my teammates," he said. "If that means playing outfield, third, first, catching, that's good with me. I want to feel like I can help my team win, no matter what."

Pena did that by hooking up the Braves with Yunel Escobar. They were childhood friends in Cuba, and Pena defected several years before Escobar. When Escobar followed in October 2004, as documented in the September issue of ChopTalk, it was Pena who encouraged Braves scouts to take a close look at the skinny infielder.

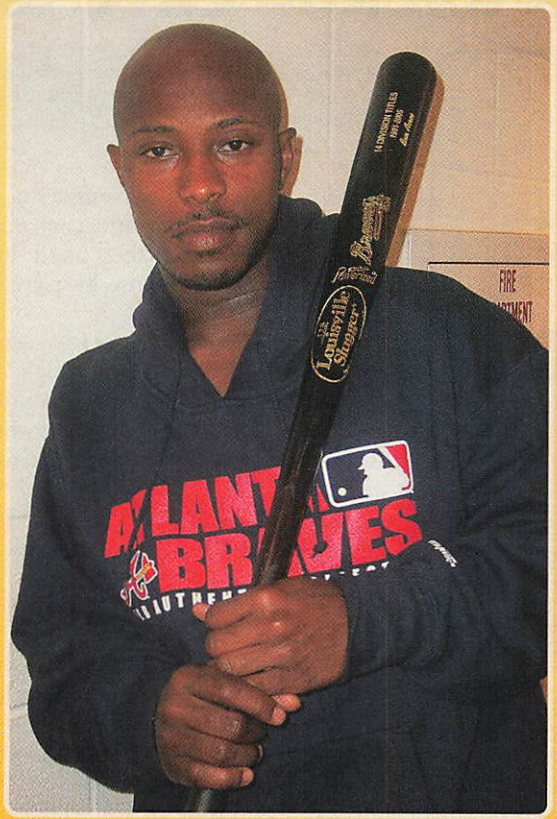
"We used to play doubleheaders," Pena recalled. "Back then, he'd pitch the first game and I'd catch, and then we'd switch. I'd pitch and he'd catch."

> "HE'D (ESCOBAR) PITCH THE FIRST GAME AND I'D CATCH, AND THEN WE'D SWITCH. I'D PITCH AND HE'D CATCH."

Some backup catchers get surly; some become pranksters. And some use their time on the bench as on-the-job training, prepping for a role as coach or manager. Brewers manager Ned Yost and Giants manager Bruce Bochy, among others, did time as backup catchers. So, is management in Pena's future? Maybe, maybe not.

"I don't think about it," he said. "I have a lot to think about with catching and everything, so I can't even think about coaching. Only on Playstation."

And in those games, he's starting every single time.



PATTY RASMUSSEN

SLUMP BUSTER

BASEBALL PLAYERS will try lots of unusual things to break out of a slump, and Willie Harris (L) is no different. After suffering through most of July with nary an extrabase hit or an RBI, Harris decided to take a suggestion from a pitcher of all people. On July 21, he used a commemorative bat belonging to clubhouse manager Ben Acree.

"I was going to use it myself," said Tim Hudson, "but I don't get up to bat enough. Willie uses a short bat anyway, so I said, 'Why don't you try it?' And he did."

The bat, painted black with "14 Division Titles 1991-2005 Ben Acree" printed on it, was made of rough, cheap wood. But there was nothing cheap about the three hits Harris got out of it, which lead to his career high, and franchise record tying six hits in the game.

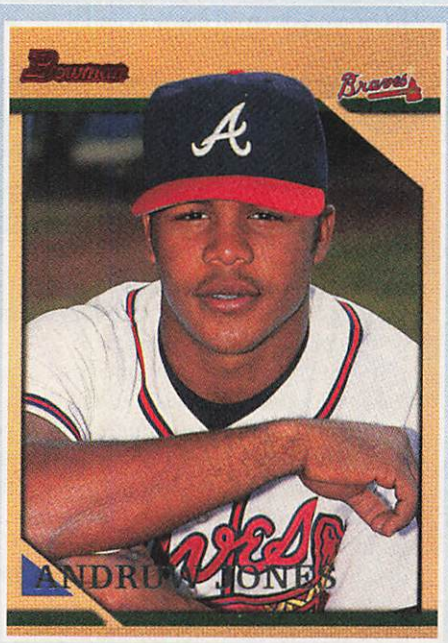
Using the commemorative bat for the first three innings of the game versus the Cardinals, Harris got a single in both the first and second innings and a triple in the third inning. At that point, he opted to retire the "slump buster," fearing the bat was due to let him down eventually. Using one of his regular bats, Harris went on to get another triple in the fourth inning and two more singles, one in the sixth and another in the eighth innings.

In his previous 20 games, Harris was 8-for-52 (.154) with no RBIs or extrabase hits.

He raised his batting average from .317 to .339 that night and became the first Brave to go 6-for-6 since Felix Millan in 1970. No other Brave in the modern era (post 1900) has ever had a six-hit game.

- PATTY RASMUSSEN

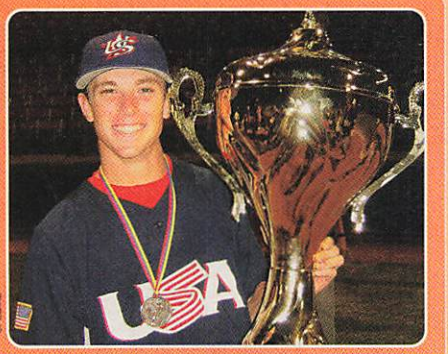
CARD OF THE MONTH



MIGHT WE HAVE SEEN the last of Andruw Jones in a Braves uniform? That answer won't likely be forthcoming for another month or more. So, collectors might want to use this time to stock up on some of Andruw's cards, including this 1996 Bowman Foil #192, which was one of his first cards in a major league uniform.

Remember, 1996 was the season Andruw made his big league debut, climbing all the way from Class A to the majors in a matter of two months. He appeared in 31 regular season games, then made big news in October, becoming the youngest player (19) to hit a postseason home run, the youngest to hit one in the World Series, and the first NL player to homer in his first two World Series at-bats.

This card carries portrait photos on the front and back of one of the most accomplished teenagers in baseball history. We found the card selling online for prices ranging from $1.79 to $3.99. Check with your local card dealers (consult the Yellow Pages) or do an internet search to shop for this and other Braves cards for your collection.



BRAVES

BURDETTE'S GENES

NOLAN FONTANA, 16, the youngest grandson of Braves Hall of Fame pitcher Lou Burdette, certainly chose a fitting way to honor his grandfather during the Braves Hall of Fame weekend.

Rather than come to Atlanta for the induction ceremony, Aug. 19, Nolan (above) and his parents, Paul Fontana and Elaina Burdette Fontana, were in Barquisimeto, Venezuela, where Nolan and his teammates on the USA Baseball Youth National Team won a gold medal at the International Baseball Federation (IBAF) World Youth Championships.

During the school year, Nolan plays varsity baseball for West Orange High School in Orlando, Fla. He also captained the Orlando Scorpions 16-and under travel team. He was invited to the USA Baseball Youth National Team trials in Cary, N.C., making the final 18-man roster by beating out competitors from around the country. He made the squad as both a shortstop and a pitcher.

"Earning a gold medal with USA on my uniform has been the most incredible experience of my life!" said Nolan, who pitched against both Japan and Mexico, and had a .400 batting average and .667 on-base percentage in the tournament.

Team USA went undefeated through pool play, defeating Brazil, Japan and Mexico. The team also won playoff games against Colombia and Cuba before defeating Brazil, 8-2, in the gold medal game.

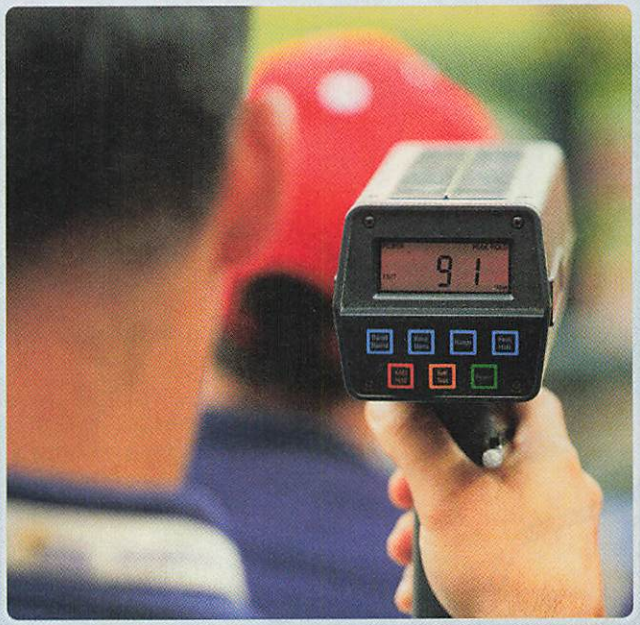
"This was truly a wonderful experience for us all," said Elaina. "My dad and Nolan had a very special bond, and they both make me very proud."

Burdette, the MVP of the 1957 World Series, died in February.

- PATTY RASMUSSEN

HOW DO THEY DO THAT?

MEASURE PITCH SPEED



ALLISON BARRETT

WHEN A BRAVES PITCHER fires strike three past a hitter, fans throughout Turner Field instantly know the pitch speed. The system that makes this possible is almost completely automated. It starts with an unmanned radar gun. Manufactured by JUGS, the radar gun is mounted directly behind home plate in a camera pit.

"It's aimed toward the pitcher," explained audio/video technical manager Chip Graham. "As soon as the ball is released, it gets the highest speed possible at that point. And that's the data that it sends back to us."

The signal with that data travels to the Braves control room on the media level. Their software captures the pitch speed and displays it in three different places: The left-field "Speed of Pitch" board, another board on the outfield wall that also shows the pitch count, and on all of Turner Field's in-house television monitors.

The pitch speed shows for eight seconds. That leaves time for fans to see it and for the radar gun to reset.

That signal from the radar gun gets split at one point, sending the same miles per hour figure to all the game's broadcast crews. That way everyone has the same pitch speed.

Jimmy Thomas, who runs this display in the control room, usually sets the pitch speed display on "auto." Since the Speed of Pitch board also shows scoring decisions and home run distance, he can switch away from the velocity reading to show other key information.

Graham believes the Mets' Billy Wagner posted the fastest reading ever at Turner Field when he hit 102 or 103 miles per hour. Former Brave John Rocker used to approach the century mark, as well. The system ignores anything over 110 miles per hour. The Braves programmed it that way to lessen the chance of displaying erroneous data.

"If I see 170 miles per hour there, I think there's a problem," said Graham.

- STEVE FALL

PLAYING PEPPER

ANDRUW JONES

ALLISON SHIRREFFS

With 16 games left in the season, Andruw was hitting .220, the lowest of any season in his career, including his rookie year when he batted .231.

INTERVIEW BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

CHOPTALK If you could go back and start this season all over again, what would you do differently?

ANDRUW JONES A lot of things, you know. Everybody would want to be more consistent. There are a lot of things - hitting-wise, defense-wise, everything. I'm going to be working on some specific things that I've seen pitchers do differently toward me. They've pitched me totally different this year than last year and the year before. They've made adjustments to me, so I need to make more adjustments to them.

CT How are they pitching you differently this year?

ANDRUW I was getting a lot of change-ups. Normally I get sliders. Now I have to be aware of that and make those adjustments, and I have to be ready for whatever else they're going to give me next season.

CT How has this season impacted you mentally? You always act like it doesn't, but you wouldn't be human if it didn't.

ANDRUW I really don't listen to what anyone says or writes about me during the season. I've learned that you really can't worry about what other people say about you. I hear it, partly because people are going to tell me what other people are saying. But I focus on going out to help my team and trying to have fun playing the game that I love.

CT Do you hear from the fans, especially the ones in the outfield? Are they still behind you?

ANDRUW The fans in the outfield have been great. They've been supportive of me all year and have cheered for me, even when I'm doing bad. I don't know, maybe they see that I'm going out there and trying hard to do my job. Everybody can struggle in their life, and maybe this is the year that I have to struggle to learn something. It's been an up-and-down season. I wish we could play better and get in the playoffs and then put the season behind us.

CT What happened to your elbow when you reached over the fence May 27 to rob Philadelphia's Greg Dobbs of a home run?

ANDRUW It was like a hyperextension. It bothered me every time I had to extend on my swing, so it was hurting me all the time. I had other aches and pains, too, that everybody who plays has, but I don't make any excuses for it affecting the way I played. I just didn't play to high standards.

> "EVERYBODY CAN STRUGGLE IN THEIR LIFE, AND MAYBE THIS IS THE YEAR THAT I HAVE TO STRUGGLE TO LEARN SOMETHING."

CT Is this injury something that requires rest to heal, or is it something that needs surgery or therapy?

ANDRUW I had an X-ray and they didn't see anything wrong. It's definitely something that time will heal. When the season ends, I can rest and really give it time to get back to normal. I want to give it at least a month off before I do other stuff. Every injury you get, you'd like to take a month to heal.

CT Do you wish you had taken time off, maybe gone on the disabled list or asked Bobby Cox for a day off earlier in the season?

ANDRUW No, absolutely not. I never regret playing the game.

CT Are you mentally prepared for the possibility that this could be your last season with the Braves?

ANDRUW I honestly didn't think about it. I've had other things to think about this season! If it happens, it happens. I hope it doesn't, but if (I do leave the Braves), that's the way the business goes.

CT Your dad, Henry, helped you make your last deal with the Braves. What has he told you about your upcoming free agency?

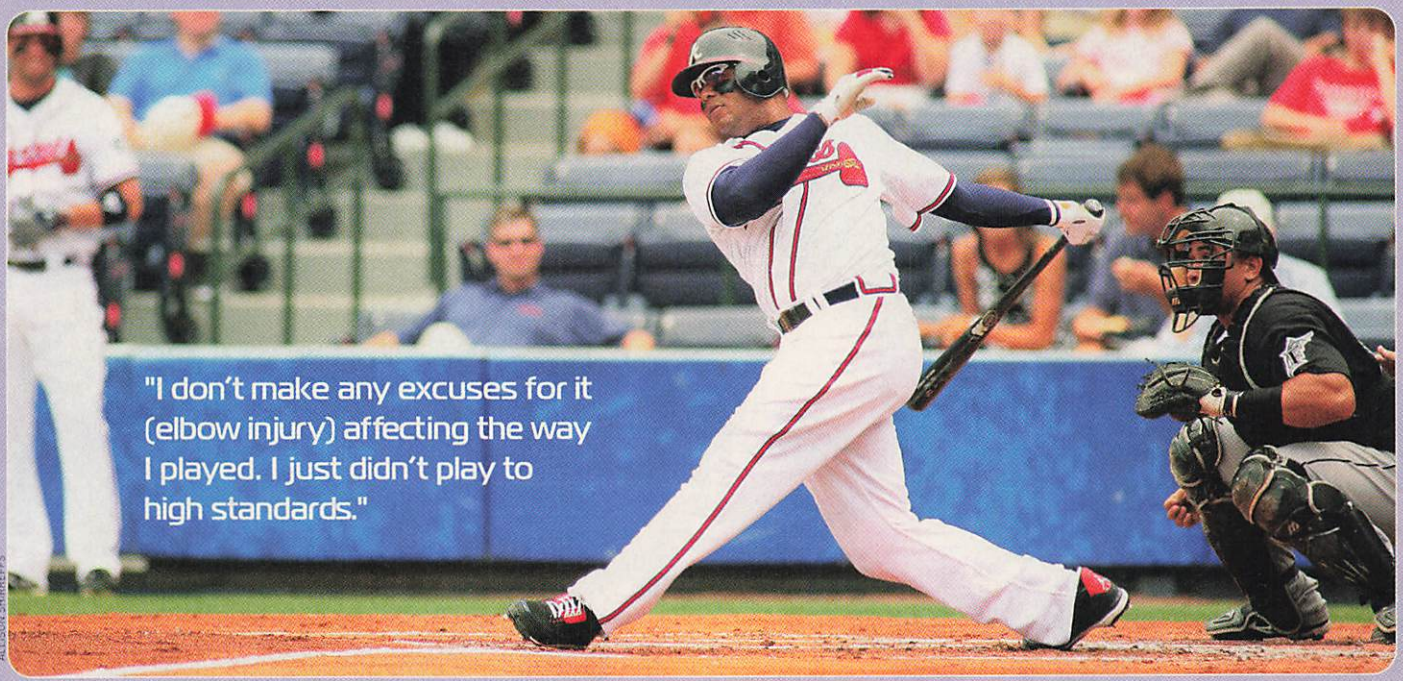
ANDRUW He didn't negotiate for me. We knew what the Braves were offering, and we just went in and took it.

CT So this negotiation is all on (your agent) Scott Boras?

ANDRUW I make my own decision. He's going to come and tell me what's out there and what's not out there, and his advice about taking it or not. He's the one that works for me. He's going to go out and try to find the best contract he can get for me, but it's up to me to say I'll take it or not. It might be that the best deal isn't somewhere I want to play, but it's all going to be up to me. I've got the decision. It's up to me.

CT Is that going to be a difficult decision to make?

ANDRUW I don't think so. It will have to do with who the team is that wants me and how willing I am to move, if that's the case. I'm sure when the season is over, I'll be thinking about this even more. The Braves will have, basically, a month to decide if they want to keep me or not. They have a lot of decisions to make. They have a new owner. They have other guys who are going to be free agents after me - Chipper Jones, Edgar Renteria. There are a lot of decisions



ALISON SHIREFFS

they'll need to make. We'll see what happens. It's going to be tough.

CT When the Braves brought in Mark Teixeira and began using him as a cleanup hitter, dropping you to seventh in the batting order, did you see that as a signal that they were strengthening the team in case you weren't back in 2008?

ANDRUW No, they brought him in because they needed a hitter. If I had been hitting well, he probably wouldn't have been hitting fourth! He's been a really consistent hitter, always, and has been so good for our team. It's been great having two switch-hitters back to back. It's pretty awesome.

CT It doesn't seem possible with the amount of hitting talent that the Braves have that this team has remained consistently under .500 since the 7-1 start. How do you explain it?

ANDRUW We do have a great lineup. But it's all about the pitching. If you don't have the pitching, you're not going to get far. Look at the Braves back in the days when I first came up. We had a good lineup, but we didn't have a powerful lineup that was going to blow out guys. We had pitching that could help get the job done. In this game, if you don't have pitching, you're not going to win. You can score 20 runs, but without the pitching, the other team will score 30! It's all pitching, and without it, you're not going far.

CT You always look so carefree. Did this season bother you?

ANDRUW It did, but in a way it didn't, because I know I'm better than what I showed, and I know I'll do better. (The season) was one of those things that went one way and you're wishing it didn't. I just don't make excuses. I'm putting it behind me and looking forward to the next season.

You know, I hit 51 home runs (2005), but the year before that, I hit 29 home runs. I know what I did wrong, and I went to work on it, came out and had a great year. In 2006, I didn't hit 50 home runs, but I did okay - I hit 41. The pitchers are going to keep making adjustments, and it's up to me to keep learning them. One year you might get all sliders, one after the other, every pitcher was throwing sliders, so you make the adjustments to sliders. Now they're throwing changeups, and I have to adjust to that.

CT Did you watch the Curacao Little League team on television? How much are you involved in Little League in Curacao?

ANDRUW I always watch them when they're in the tournament. I have a tournament, the Andruw Jones Tournament, that I sponsor in Curacao. It gives the Little League a chance to compete against other teams, more than just practicing against each other. I get equipment for them every other year - bats, balls, gloves, trophies. They have nice facilities where they can play. Little League is big down there. Everyone plays.

CT What do you and your wife, Nicole, have planned for this off-season?

ANDRUW We're hosting a charity golf tournament in November for Jaden's Ladder. We'll probably do things around Atlanta, but we don't have any trips planned yet. We'll wait until our season is over before we make our plans.

CT When will you get back in the batting cage?

ANDRUW It depends on how bored I get! Sometimes I get right into it, but I know I need to rest my body. I work out by myself, but when (other players) start hitting, sometimes they'll come over to hit in my cage.

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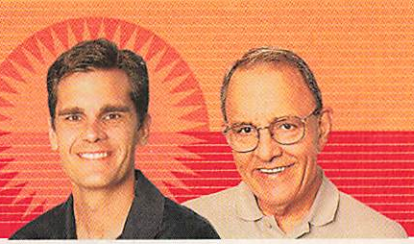


CARAY CORNER

THERE'S NO DOUBT WHAT THE CLUB NEEDS IN '08

SO, WERE 2006 AND 2007 a bump in the road, or a dead end?

Of all the questions asked of me by Braves fans, the most frequent one is the same one my grandfather, Harry Caray, asked year after year of the Cubs: "When are we gonna get some pitching?"

John Smoltz and Tim Hudson had great, sometimes brilliant years.

In fact, if John had any run support at all, he'd be a legitimate 20-game winning candidate. The fact that he already owns the Braves strikeout record and is closing on 3,000 strikeouts only cements his Hall of Fame credentials.

Hudson, if not for three bullpen meltdowns and a September fade, may also have cracked 20 wins.

But you can't ride two horses all year long if you wanna win the big rodeo. And that's the biggest issue again for the Braves in 2008.

One stat tells it all. Through mid-September, Hudson and Smoltz combined for 46 quality starts. (That means six or more innings of work, four or fewer runs. That's a 4.50 ERA.)

The seven other starters combined totaled 26 quality starts. In other words, in 71 of the first 144 games, the Braves starter's ERA was either over 4.50, or he couldn't work at least six innings.

That's not a championship-caliber starting rotation.

To beat the Mets and Phillies, and to advance into and win a World Series, the Braves have to find at least one more starter.

Hopefully, Mike Hampton comes back and can pitch. But he's missed two years. Chuck James again won double digits, but needs a third pitch. Jo-Jo Reyes is a kid, and while he has good "stuff", it hasn't yet transferred from the minor leagues.

Will Lance Cormier be healthy? Buddy Carlyle won one major league game before this season and is with his seventh organization.

Fairly or unfairly, every Braves pitching staff will be judged by an almost-impossible benchmark: Smoltz, Glavine, Maddux. To win a championship, you don't need three Hall of Fame starters, although it certainly helps.

The reality is the Mets and Phillies aren't going away. They have dynamic, powerful, young offenses. If the baseball maxim of good pitching gets out good hitting is true, a lot more good starting pitching is the place to start in constructing the 2008 Braves.

NOW, BEFORE YOU ALL THINK, "Other than that Mrs. Lincoln, how did you like the play?" there were some great stories this year in Atlanta. With that in mind, here are my Braves award winners for the season.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Skip Caray and Chip Caray alternate months in this space, so watch for Skip in November. Chip will be back here in December.

MVP: Edgar Renteria. Nobody had bigger hits on a more consistent basis than he did. His August injury and loss of 30 games played was devastating to a lineup that really struggled in run-scoring situations without him.

Pitcher of the year: Peter Moylan. If you had said two years ago that a pharmaceutical rep from Australia who hadn't pitched professionally in years would lead all NL rookies in ERA, then buy a lottery ticket. An overpowering sinker, a blistering fastball, and a wonderfully wicked and witty sense of humor makes the Man Down Under come out on top of the pitching surprise pile.

Rookie of the year: Yunel Escobar. If you can survive a 90-mile boat ride from Cuba, a 90-mph fastball isn't going to faze you. Second, third, short, he plays 'em all. Rocket arm, line drive bat with gap power to right-center field.

Comeback player: Chipper Jones. Were it not for his long stint on the DL, he'd be in the thick of the MVP race. He flirted with the batting title into mid-September, and has played Gold Glove caliber defense all year. I hope that before he retires, he can have at least one full injury-free year. Imagine the numbers and the possibilities.

KYB KNOW YOUR BRAVES

2006 STATISTICS * WITH TEXAS

AVG.	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	S	SB
.282	162	628	99	177	45	1	33	110	89	128	2

MARK TEIXEIRA #24

BASICS

FULL NAME	MARK CHARLES TEIXEIRA
POSITION	First Baseman
VITALS	Bats/Throws Both/Right Height 6-3 Weight 220 Age 27
BORN	April 11, 1980 Annapolis, Md.
CONTRACT	Signed through 2008.
ACQUIRED	By trade from Texas on July 31, 2007, with Ron Mahay in exchange for Jarrod Saltalamacchia, Elvis Andrus, Neftali Feliz, Matt Harrison and Beau Jones.
PERSONAL	Married (Leigh). Son (Jack).

CAREER

SOME COINCIDENCE!
Played college ball at Georgia Tech... Now playing in Georgia... Wife's first name is Georgia (Leigh).

HOMER HAPPY
Hit more home runs (140) in first four seasons (through 2006) than all but three players in major league history (Ralph Kiner, 168; Albert Pujols, 160; Eddie Mathews, 153).

NUMEROLOGY
Prefers to wear No. 23, same as childhood hero Don Mattingly, but settled for No. 24 with Braves because Matt Diaz wears 23.

ANCIENT HISTORY
Set all-time major league record for RBIs by a switch-hitter with 144 in 2005, breaking 109-year-old record of 136 set by George Davis of Giants in 1896.

PHOTO

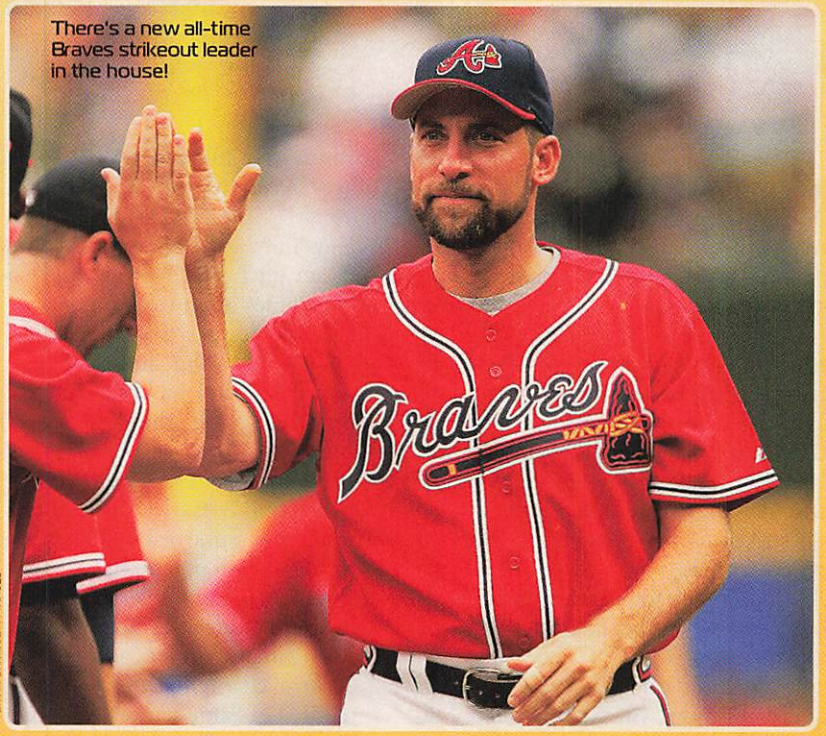
ALLISON SHIRREFFS

STILL SMOKIN'

JOHN SMOLTZ just keeps mowing down hitters. He set the franchise career strikeout record Aug. 19, and on Sept. 1, he held Washington hitless through seven innings until **Ron Belliard** led off the eighth with a clean single. **Bobby Cox** immediately pulled him after the hit, but the Braves won, 7-1, and Smoltz was credited with the victory and 10 more strikeouts.

On Aug. 19, the 40-year-old ace struck out a season-high 12 en route to breaking Hall of Famer **Phil Niekro**'s previous record of 2,912 career strikeouts.

At press time, Smoltz had 2,955 career strikeouts, ranking 16th on the all-time major league list. With 177 strikeouts for the season at press time, he was within striking distance of the sixth season of 200 strikeouts in his career.



There's a new all-time Braves strikeout leader in the house!

BRIAN BAHR/GETTY IMAGES

WHAT A MONTH!

Mark Teixeira took to a Braves uniform like a fish to water! The slugging switch-hitter, who debuted with a home run and four RBIs on Aug. 1 after his July 31 acquisition from Texas, was named co-National League Player of the Week for Aug. 20-26, then a few days later was named NL Player of the Month for August.

Teixeira hit .315 (35-for-111) with 10 home runs and 32 RBIs in his first month in the NL. He led the league in RBIs for the month and tied for the lead in home runs. He also scored 20 runs, had 13 multi-hit games, and had consecutive multi-home-run games on Aug. 19 and 20.

Teixeira received a 52-inch Sharp LCD-TV for the monthly honor and an engraved Tourneau watch for the weekly award.

ON THE MOVE

The Braves shook up the pecking order in the bullpen Aug. 24 when they unexpectedly designated closer **Bob Wickman** for assignment. Wickman eventually was picked up by Arizona. To take Wickman's spot on the roster, **Joey Devine** was called up for the fifth time this year. At the same time, **Martin Prado** was sent down, and **Jose Ascanio** was called up.

On Aug. 21, **Chuck James** went on the disabled list with an inflamed rotator cuff. He was replaced by **Jo-Jo Reyes**, who was called up from Richmond.

Edgar Renteria (ankle) came off the disabled list Aug. 22 - but only for a moment. He felt his injured ankle give on a check swing in his first at-bat. Renteria was disabled the next day, and Prado, who had been optioned to Richmond, was recalled.

Pete Orr was recalled from Richmond Aug. 27, and Devine was returned to Richmond.

When rosters expanded to 40 on Sept. 1, the Braves activated James and immediately called up **Julio Franco**, **Brayan Pena** and lefty reliever **Royce Ring**. Prado was called back Sept. 4, Renteria was activated Sept. 7, and catcher **Clint Sammons** was called up from Mississippi Sept. 11 to cover for **Corky Miller**, who left the club to attend the birth of his son, Chase.

BUSY BODY

Tim Hudson had his sinker working to near-perfection Sept. 10 against the Mets, getting the first 14 outs of the game on groundballs. Second baseman **Martin Prado** probably felt like he was taking infield practice, because he recorded seven straight assists on groundballs during a stretch that began in the second inning and extended through the fourth inning. Prado finished with 11 assists in the game, the most by a Braves second baseman in a nine-inning game since **Glenn Hubbard** registered 12 on April 14, 1985, when **Rick Mahler** and **Bruce Sutter** were pitching.

SHORT HOPS

- **Mike Hampton** threw off the mound Sept. 12 for the first time since April surgery.
- For the first time in franchise history, the Braves have nine players with 10 or more home runs (**Chipper Jones**, **Andruw Jones**, **Brian McCann**, **Jeff**

Francoeur, Kelly Johnson, Mark Teixeira, Matt Diaz, Edgar Renteria, Scott Thorman). However, it may be the first time since 1997 that they finish without a 30-home run man.

- Chipper Jones sprained his right oblique Sept. 10 during pre-game practice and missed the entire Mets series. He returned Sept. 14 at Washington and had three hits.

- The Braves gave reliever Tanyon Sturtze his unconditional release Aug. 21. He was trying to recover from shoulder surgery last May to join the Atlanta bullpen.

- Tim Hudson had a nine-game win streak snapped Aug. 25 with a 5-4 loss at St. Louis. It was just his second career defeat (95-2) when he's had a lead of three or more runs.

- In spite on a long layoff dating to Aug. 3 due to an ankle injury, Edgar Renteria returned Sept. 8 and promptly singled in his first at-bat and went 2-for-4 in the game.

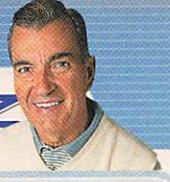
- Chipper Jones is the Braves' nominee for the NL Hank Aaron Award.

- Jeff Francoeur struck out five times Aug. 28 vs. the Marlins, and the Braves struck out 19 times in an 11-inning loss to Florida. Francoeur's five strikeouts tied the franchise record also attained by Andruw Jones April 20.

- Arizona's Micah Owings, a native of Gainesville, Ga., had a big day in his home state Aug. 18 when he not only pitched the Diamondbacks past the Braves, 12-6, but also hit two home runs and a double and drove in six runs. His 11 total bases were the most by a pitcher since Jim Tobin of the Boston Braves hit three home runs May 13, 1942. The Braves' Tony Cloninger still holds the RBI record for a pitcher. He had nine on July 3, 1966 at San Francisco when he hit two grand slams.

- Mark Teixeira's 32 RBIs in August equaled the 32 runs Bob Horner drove in during July 1980 to set the Braves' monthly record. Horner hit 14 home runs that month, four more than Teixeira's 10.

JOHN
SCHUERHOLZ
GENERAL MANAGER



WE'RE GOOD ENOUGH, BUT WE JUST HAVEN'T DONE IT

WE'RE IN WASHINGTON and had the opportunity to receive a behind-the-scenes tour of the White House and to have a private meeting with President Bush. I was joined by John Smoltz, Tim Hudson, Brian McCann and Jeff Francoeur.

It was sensational, a remarkable experience for all of us.

The president was very candid in talking about the presidency and the importance of the responsibility of decision-making. And we talked about baseball, too. He talked about Julio Franco and Ruben Sierra when they were with Texas, and he talked about the division races and how tough and demanding and competitive it is.

I'd previously been to the White House twice to receive congratulations as part of World Championship teams in 1985 and 1995 and was on another private tour two years ago. But this is the first time I had the chance to sit with the president for 20 minutes. It was a free exchange between all of us.

The deals we made at the trading deadline have not resulted in us playing any better. We knew what we needed was pitching, and we tried to get that. We couldn't, so we felt the next-best thing was to overload the offense and win by scoring more runs.

It seems like when our pitchers allow three or fewer runs, we score less. And when our pitchers give up a lot of runs, we score eight or nine. I can't explain it. There's no reason for it. It's just baseball, I guess. That's not much of an explanation - just an observation.

The maddening thing for all of us is that we're a good enough team, and if we'd just won one more game a month for five months - five games - we'd be atop the wild card race. Just little things here or there. The team is good enough to have done it, but we haven't.

> "I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT. THERE'S NO REASON FOR IT. IT'S JUST BASEBALL, I GUESS."

We wish it had turned out differently, and we're still in it as I write this. It seems like we keep getting new life, and until they say we can't play for anything, we're going to keep trying to do it and play like we're capable of playing.

We designated Bob Wickman for assignment because Bobby (Cox) wanted to restructure the bullpen in a way that impacted Bob. Obviously, Bobby and Roger (McDowell) felt comfortable with the guys we have and the young guys we brought up.

I hoped Mark Teixeira would catapult us into the playoffs this year and next, and he's done everything he can do to make that happen. It just hasn't. But he hasn't left anything on the table. Player of the Month... driving in big runs... playing good defense.

I don't regret making that deal at all. You can't have any regrets when you acquire a player of that magnitude and that caliber of person. He gives us a better chance to win, and even though we had to give up a lot to get him. As long as we're in this business to win - as a player, coach, manager or general manager - that's what we're going to try to do.

It still would be nice if he can help lead us into the playoffs this year or next. That would be the ideal return on the investment we made in trading young talent. The second-best investment would be to get into the playoffs one of two years.

We're trying to find a place for Mike Hampton to pitch in winter ball to get him somewhat advanced going into spring training. We've learned, not just with Mike, but with anyone who has a chronic arm injury, that nothing is for sure. But we're going to plan to have him back in the spring and see what happens.

LITTLE CHAMPS

Chuck James shares a pre-game moment with a Warner Robins Little Leaguer.

ATLANTA BRAVES

FOR THE SECOND straight year, the Braves were able to welcome the Little League World Champions to Turner Field from a nearby Georgia city. Last year, it was Columbus, Ga., that won the title, and this year it was the team from Warner Robins, Ga.

The Little Leaguers met Braves players, coaches and **Bobby Cox** Sept. 8 while they watched batting practice on the field. Before the game, members of the Braves presented the Warner Robbins team with an autographed Braves flag in a special ceremony. A commemorative video highlighted the team's journey to the championship, and immediately before the game, the Little Leaguers went to their respective positions and greeted the Braves players as they took the field.

WHAT TIMING!

Jeff Francoeur helped raise nearly $13,000 for the benefit of the Children's Tumor Foundation on Aug. 18 when he appeared at a meet-and-greet event at Dynamo Swim Club in Chamblee, Ga. But it was the encore that really had his fans buzzing.

At that night's Braves game, a group of approximately 500 people from the Dynamo event (the "Tumornators") paraded around Turner Field during the pre-game festivities. Then Francoeur thrilled them by hitting not one - but two - home runs in the game against the Diamondbacks.

IN THE PINK

The Braves honored breast cancer survivors on Sept. 2 with "Breast Cancer Awareness Day" presented by Publix and Skirt! Magazine. More than 1,000 participants, including 250 survivors and 750 family and friends, took part.

Proceeds from the Atlanta Braves Foundation's silent auction and sales of special "Breast Cancer Awareness Day" t-shirts benefited **Susan G. Komen** for the Cure, supporting research, education, advocacy, and free services for cancer patients and their families throughout metro Atlanta.

Survivors and their family and friends were invited to a pre-game hospitality reception hosted by WXIA newsperson **Karyn Greer**. **Veronica Snitker**, wife of third base coach **Brian Snitker**, spoke at the reception about surviving breast cancer. The survivors took part in a pre-game walk around the field and formed a "Diamond of Hope."

THE MAN

Tim Hudson is the Braves' candidate for the Major League Baseball Players Association Marvin Miller Man of the Year Award. The honor, named after the first executive director of the MLBPA, is presented each year to a player elected by his peers as the one who best combines on-field performance with community service. **John Smoltz** won in 2002 and '03.

Fan voting narrowed nominees from 30 to six, and the players will make the final selection, as well as vote for other Players Choice Awards. The Players Choice Awards include Overall Player of the Year, Outstanding Player, Pitcher, Rookie and Comeback Player in each league. Winners will be announced after the World Series.

IT'S IN THE BAG

The Atlanta Braves Wives Brown Bag Bonanza raised more than $33,000 to benefit the Atlanta Braves Foundation, Anna's Angel Fund, and Jaden's Ladder, on Aug. 18 at Turner Field. The Braves wives sold more than 800 baseballs autographed by Braves players and **Bobby Cox** in the fourth annual Brown Bag Bonanza fundraiser. Fans purchased autographed baseballs, cloaked in brown bags for a flat fee of $40 to support the fundraiser. Anna's Angel Fund, established by a young Atlanta-area cancer patient, offers financial assistance to youth battling pediatric cancer. Jaden's Ladder is a non-profit organization that assists survivors of domestic violence.

PERFECT SHOPPERS

Fifty students from D.H. Stanton Elementary School who went the entire 2006-07 school year without missing a day were rewarded with a $100 gift card to DICK'S Sporting Goods and a chance on Aug. 18 to shop with **Tim Hudson**, **Kelly Johnson**, **Peter Moylan**, **Chris Woodward** and **Corky Miller**.

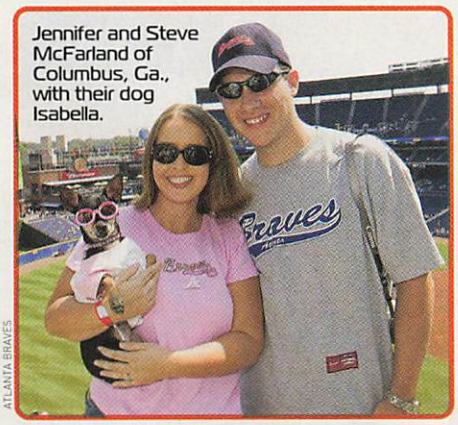
The kids were split into two groups, and each player was in charge of five students per group, though the youngsters found ways to interact with all of the Braves.

The Braves have a long-term partnership with D.H. Stanton that includes tutoring, mentoring and career development opportunities.

DOG PARK

The Braves' second Bark in the Park promotion of the season was a big hit Sept. 9. In fact, it was a sellout. Almost 600 canines and 1,000 of their most-devoted family members and friends filled the special area of Turner Field set aside for them.

All proceeds benefited **Bobby Cox** "Paws beCause... They are Worth Saving" foundation for homeless pets.



Jennifer and Steve McFarland of Columbus, Ga., with their dog Isabella.

ATLANTA BRAVES

BALLS & STRIKES

Coaches and players from Team Atlanta, the 2007 Major League Baseball (MLB) Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) World Series Girls Softball Champions, were honored prior to the Braves game on Sept. 3 at Turner Field. This is the seventh consecutive championship for Team Atlanta. They're halfway to the Braves' streak of 14 straight division titles.

WE HAVE TO SOLIDIFY THE STARTING ROTATON

IT'S DECISION TIME for the Braves and the free agents. I can't comment, one way or the other, on what I think will happen with guys like Andruw Jones. Free agency has certainly been great for the players, but it's more challenging for the teams.

I played in the days before free agency, when a team would keep their players almost until they were in their late 30s or so. Jackie Robinson played his nine years or so with the Dodgers, and they traded him to the Giants and he left the game - went home and went into business.

Free agency has definitely changed the thinking upstairs, in the front offices. It's more difficult to build a team than it used to be, because you have to plan things that are unknown. You're thinking, "This guy will be gone for sure"... "We might be able to sign this guy." There's a lot more work nowadays than there used to be.

You always want to keep your own guys, the guys you developed and those you've had playing for you. It's not always possible. That's the way the game is structured now. A lot of teams lose guys they want to keep.

I do think baseball, the way a team is built, goes in cycles. The way teams build their success is different. Milwaukee is doing it all with their farm system. St. Louis uses a lot of trading and free agency, not as much reliance on the farm. We do it by using our farm and free agency.

Most teams build their teams in cycles - farm, trade, free agency. The exceptions are the Yankees and Red Sox. They're always going to spend $125 million, more than the rest of the teams, because they can. And if they want to pay the luxury tax, that's up to them. It's not the way to develop ballplayers, but that's how you win.

> "I'M CONFIDENT THAT HE'LL (MIKE HAMPTON) BE ABLE TO COME BACK AFTER TWO YEARS OF NOT PITCHING..."

We've seen some good developments this season. Some of the early questions about our team turned out to be some of the brightest spots - Kelly Johnson at second, Chipper remaining healthy most of the season and returning to form, the emergence of Yunel Escobar when he came up, playing sensationally, and filling in when we needed him when Edgar Renteria went down.

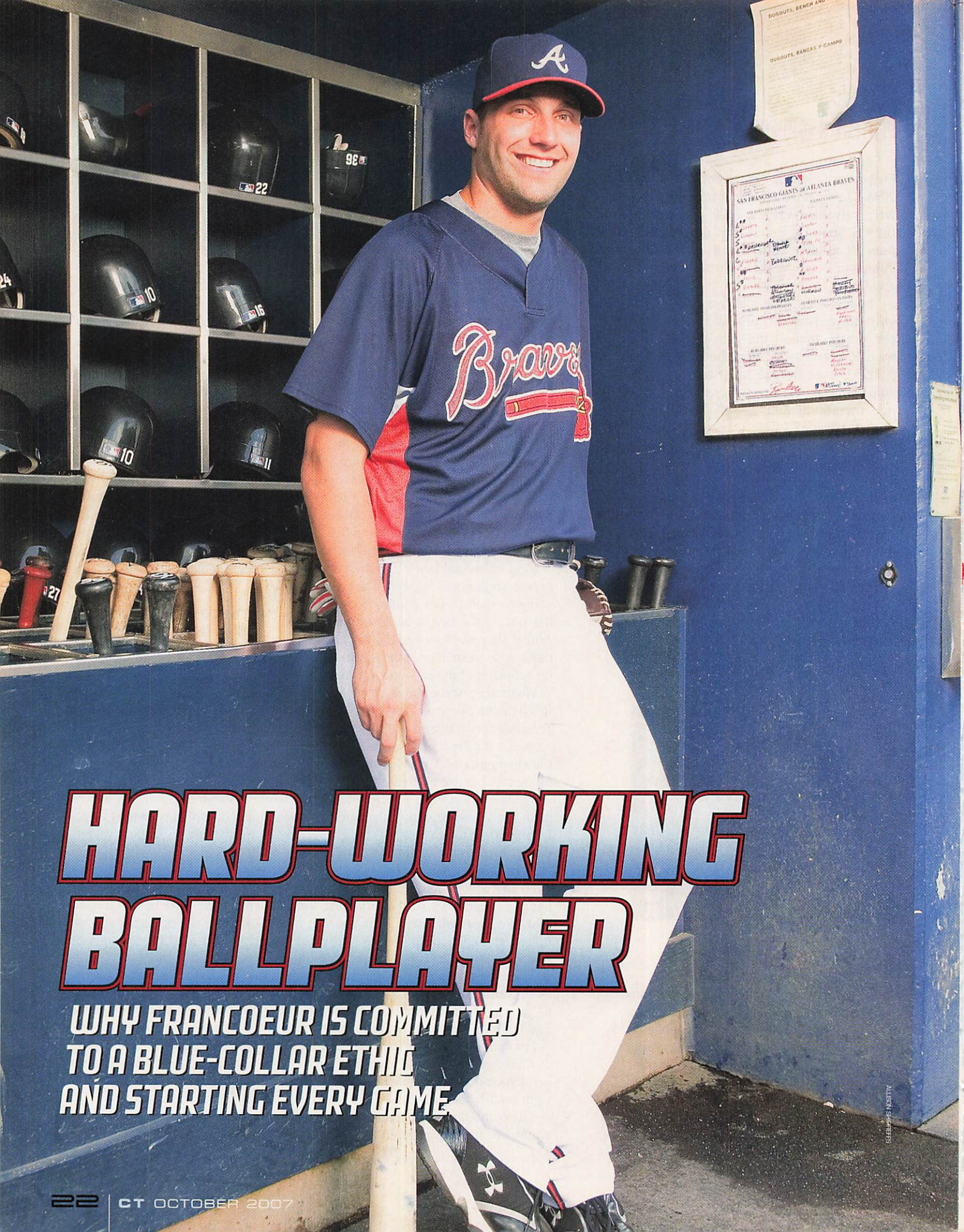
While it wasn't completely unexpected to see those things happen, it was great for us and kept us in the running when other components weren't there. Losing Edgar for so long was tough, because he was having an All-Star year. It didn't surprise me at all to see him go 2-for-4 his first game back. He's the hitting machine.

Losing Mike Hampton in spring training really set us way back. We lost Lance Cormier, who'd had a terrific spring, right at the start of the season. Mark Redman, who we tried in the fifth spot, wasn't able to help us the way we hoped, though I think Buddy Carlyle did a very good job. Those kinds of things add up. We know we need to solidify our rotation for 2008.

There might have been some people who thought we shouldn't have counted on Hampton to come back and pitch this season, but not me. He was ready to go. His elbow injury (torn flexor tendon) came out of nowhere to bite us and had nothing to do with the ligament transplant surgery he had in 2005.

I'm confident that he'll be able to come back after two years of not pitching at this level, because it's been done many times - during World War II. Guys would go away for many years, four years sometimes, and come back and pick right up. I honestly believe Mike could be a big player for us next year.

The combination of losing Hampton, Cormier and Gonzo, right out of the chute, was one of the biggest blows.



HARD-WORKING BALLPLAYER

WHY FRANCOEUR IS COMMITTED TO A BLUE-COLLAR ETHIC AND STARTING EVERY GAME

ALISON SHEEHEY

BY JACK WILKINSON

HIS IS A BLUE-CHIP, BLUE-COLLAR APPROACH to the game. It's the only way Jeff Francoeur knows how to go about the business of baseball. And isn't it a pleasure to watch when talent dovetails nicely with tenacity?

"Jeff plays every game, every inning just about," Bobby Cox said of his young rightfielder. "Plays banged up, too. Sometimes, after he's been banged up the night before, he'll call me at 8:30 in the morning. He'll say, 'I'm in there. Please, put me in there.'"

And Cox always complies. Because he always can.

"He was miffed, mad at himself," Cox said, recalling that late-August nightmare in Florida when Francoeur struck out once, twice, five times. Some players might have drowned their sorrows afterward back in the hotel lobby bar. Not Francoeur.

"I saw him out walking in the outfield the next day, about 1:30 in the afternoon," Cox said.

First pitch wasn't until 7:05.

"Jeff was out there walking and walking and walking. And it was hot, 97 degrees. But he wanted to walk, and think, and relax."

Francoeur responded with yet another multi-hit game, using the drastically revamped hitting approach he'd committed to last off-season: Be selective. Don't jump on the first pitch. Work the count, even with two strikes. Put the ball in play. Hit the ball to right. Be a big-league hitter, and not the overly-aggressive kid Chipper Jones once jokingly called "Captain Caveman."

And now?

"It's an adjustment every year," Cox said.

Every off-season, too. So this winter, when he isn't hitting in the batting cage at Andruw Jones' home with Brian McCann and ex-Brave Mark DeRosa, Francoeur will be lifting weights to add strength, a few pounds, and, hopefully, a few more homers. A slight dip in power production is the lone disappointment in Francoeur's new approach at the plate.

"I've made strides in becoming a different player," he said. "After a couple of years, I didn't want to get [stuck] in that category - all or nothing."

So, Francoeur went to work. Always has, and will again, and again.

Already a prince of the city in Atlanta, a star for his hometown team, Francoeur wants more. So, he'll take a figurative page from his boyhood idols - Dale Murphy and Cal Ripken - and gladly rejoin the working class this winter.

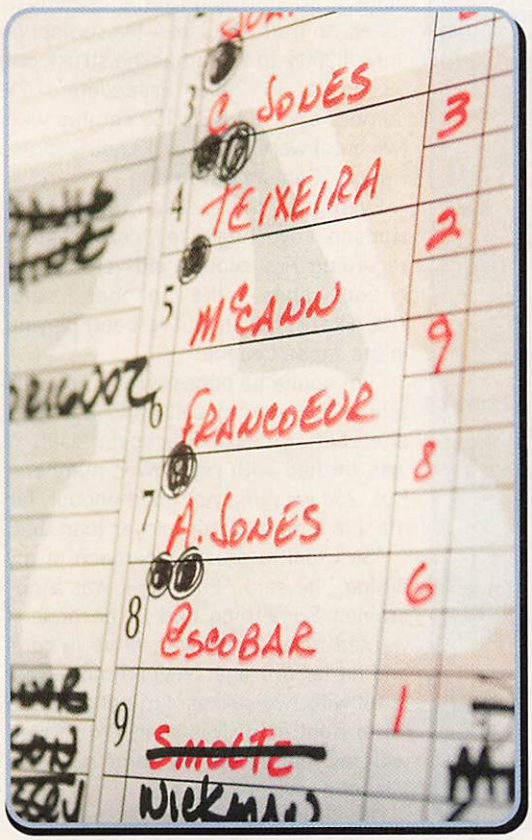
"They were two of my heroes growing up," Francoeur said of Murphy and Ripken, both not only perennial All-Stars, but also ironmen. Murphy once played in 740 consecutive games for the woebegone Braves of the '80s. Ripken, inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame last summer, holds the major league record of 2,632 straight games played.

"I've only got 2,300 to go," quipped Francoeur one night in early September, when his consecutive-games streak had reached 306. "When I heard Cal's speech at Cooperstown, he said he didn't look at [playing] as work."

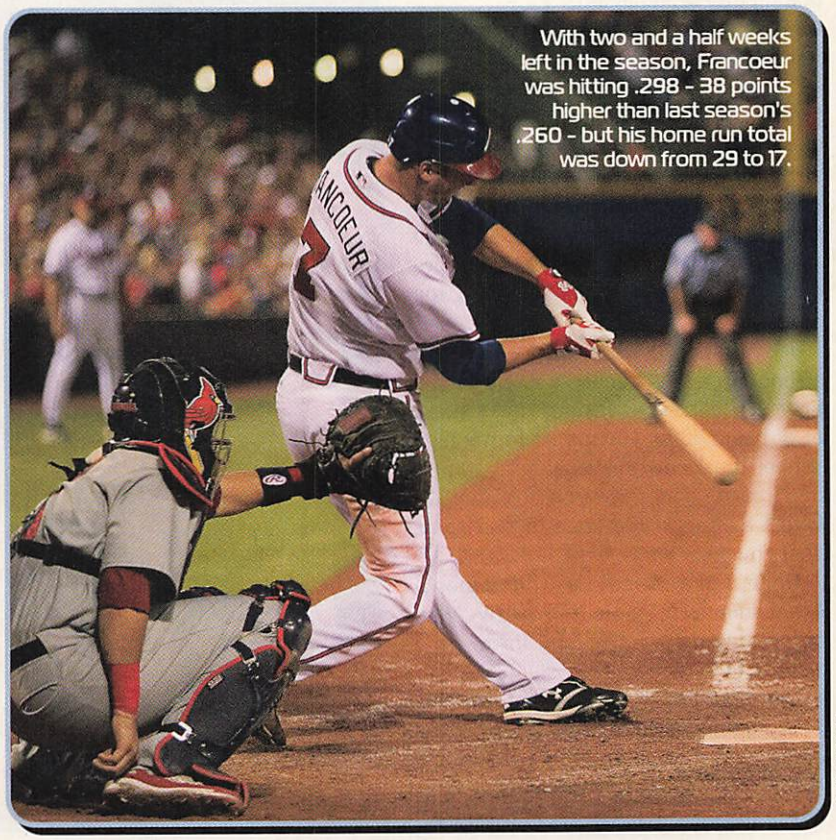
Neither did Murphy. Neither does Francoeur.

"I play every day," said Francoeur. "I'm not a guy who's very good at sitting on the bench. I'm not tired. After a game, you come in at night, get treatment and go play every day."

Not that taking a day off hasn't entered Francoeur's mind at times.



ALLISON SHIRREFFS


With two and a half weeks left in the season, Francoeur was hitting .298 - 38 points higher than last season's .260 - but his home run total was down from 29 to 17.

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AN ARMED FORCE

ARMED AND DANGEROUSLY CLOSE to first base, with a keen sense of history and the moment, Jeff Francoeur fielded the one-hopper and nearly fired to first base. And why not?

Who better to potentially preserve a no-hitter with a rare 9-3 putout?

Yet not even the kid rightfielder with the rifle arm could prolong John Smoltz's no-no the night of Sept. 7.

"If Tex (Mark Teixeira) had been on the bag, I'd have probably tried it," Francoeur told reporters afterward. "But," he said, smiling, "I'd have probably thrown it into the dugout."

If Ronnie Belliard's eighth-inning, leadoff single signaled the end of Smoltz's no-hit flirtation, it also addressed Francoeur's arm and his willingness to use it - or to even consider uncorking a throw to first.

"His arm's real good," said Phillies manager Charlie Manuel, an unabashed Francoeur-phile. "He'll get a little erratic out there, but he's got a gun. I don't know if it's as good as (Phillie Shane) Victorino's, but he's a five-tool player.

"Can he pitch, too?" Manuel asked, chuckling. "I'll bet he can throw 90."

Francoeur threw out 13 baserunners in just 67 games after he was called up from Double-A in July, 2005 - the second-highest total in the National League that season. After 13 more assists in 2006, Francoeur had 18 by this September, threatening Hank Aaron's franchise record of 20 by an outfielder.

"I think he's got the best right field arm in the league," said Bobby Cox.

And the American League - specifically, the Angels' Vladimir Guerrero?

"Jeff throws a lot better for me," Cox said. "I don't think he's (Guerrero) as accurate as Jeff. Nine out of 10 times, Jeff's right on the money. That's hard to beat. His arm's right up there with anybody in baseball."

That arm's a testament to Francoeur's ability, upbringing and unabashed approach to fielding his position.

"And my dad's favorite guy in the outfield was Roberto Clemente," Francoeur said of the late, great Pirates Hall of Famer, who for 18 seasons elevated playing right field into performance art.

"I hope I can play like that," Francoeur said. "He was fearless."

And Francoeur himself?

"I charge the ball as hard as I can," he said, "and then get rid of it."

- JACK WILKINSON

"Yeah," he said, admitting to fatigue on one August road trip in which, "I got tired and changed my approach and started pulling everything again."

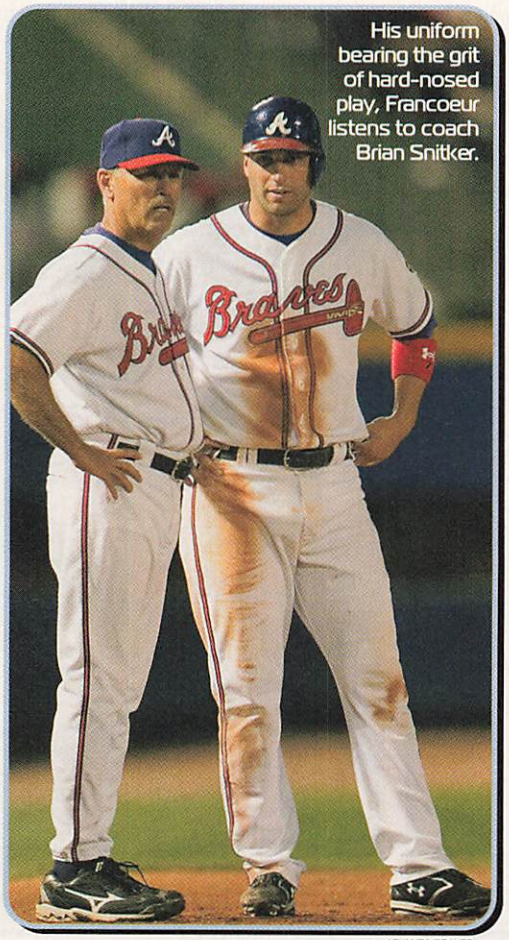
He returned home, got some rest, and regained his stroke.

"Even when you're tired, at the same time I can help the team with an at-bat, or defensively, throwing somebody out," said Francoeur, who threatened Hank Aaron's club record of 20 outfield assists this season. "I know there are days when I haven't done crap at the plate, but I've thrown a guy out at the plate in the fourth."

Yes, Francoeur was blessed with a strong arm. He keeps it finely-tuned, however. In the off-season, "I get a bucket of balls, 30 or 40, and go to my high school (Parkview in the Atlanta suburb of Lilburn) and throw on the football field," he said. "End zone to end zone. Just chuckin' 'em."

Once or twice a homestand, Francoeur will come out early, well before batting practice, and throw from right field to home plate.

"He's got one of the quickest releases in the game," said McCann, who played against Francoeur in Little League and high school. "And I'm throwing velocity out of the equation. He gets the ball out of his glove quicker than anybody in the league."



His uniform bearing the grit of hard-nosed play, Francoeur listens to coach Brian Snitker.

ATLANTA BRAVES

Francoeur also got himself out at the plate at an alarming rate after he was called up from Double-A Mississippi in July of 2005. In 70 games, he struck out 58 times. In 2006, Francoeur's 29 homers and 103 RBIs (53 coming with two outs) were offset by 132 strikeouts. Hence, "Captain Caveman."

Even late this season, when Tim Hudson overhead a conversation regarding Francoeur's old-versus-new hitting style, the pitcher said, "Kamikaze! He should've been playing in the Japan League."

"I'm gonna be honest with you. I was a little down on myself after last year, after hitting .260," Francoeur said. "I was thrilled with my power numbers. But .260 was just not good enough for me. I'm a much better player than that.

"So I took a drastic approach to my hitting," he said. "For me, it was a no-brainer. Something had to be done. I wanted to hit for power, drive in runs and hit for average. Now I'm not afraid to hit with two strikes. I'm not afraid to hit to right field. This year, I'm thrilled with my year except my home runs. It's a bit of a mystery to me."

One Francoeur hopes will be solved

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

by his weight work this winter.

Last off-season, he began by studying video of all his at-bats. What did he see?

"I saw a guy who had no approach at the plate," Francoeur said.

A Caveman, one McCann had seen a decade earlier and countless times since.

"His philosophy growing up was: See it, hit it," said McCann, who began playing against Francoeur when they were 10. "I faced him in high school, when we were juniors, and I was pitching. I had him 0-2 and he doubled off the wall on a pitch that was nearly over his head. Okay, it was at eye level. If I could go back, I'd have thrown him a slider in the dirt. But that's how talented he is.

"Jeff had never seen a pitch he didn't like," McCann said. "Last year, he wasn't satisfied hitting .260. Now he's much more valuable to the team, hitting .290 and even giving up a little power."

Hitting coach Terry Pendleton worked with Francoeur all spring and throughout the season on the basics: Be selective. Don't swing at every first pitch. Go the opposite way. Drive the ball. Don't give away a single at-bat. In short, have an approach suited for the long run. The results are very impressive, although Francoeur regresses at times.

During the August road trip that bottomed out with five strikeouts in Florida, Francoeur fell into an eight-game slump by going 5-for-38 (.132) with one RBI and 11 strikeouts in eight games. The culprits?

Francoeur was tired and, with the team slumping, his competitiveness took over.

"He tried to do too much," Pendleton said.

As for the five-strikeout game, "I was as low as anybody can be after that," said Francoeur.

A chat at the batting cage with Pendleton helped, and so did that evening's lineup card.

"After a game like that, as a young player, you worry, 'Is Bobby gonna drop me in the lineup?'" admitted Francoeur, who's still only 23 years old. "I got in [the clubhouse] the next day, and I was still batting fifth against a lefty. I was so pumped."

Francoeur's still pumped - about this off-season. About next year, and beyond. And pumped about the future, and all the blue-chip, blue-collar possibilities it holds.

He's not alone.

"Last year (2006), he went up and just swung the bat and hit 29 homers," McCann said. "Maybe next year is the year he puts it all together."

FOLLOWING A ROUTINE HELPS ME STAY READY

I'VE HAD A COUPLE of on-the-field highlights this season. The two home run game I had in Florida (Aug. 29) would be up there with the game-winning double against the Phillies on September 5. In the case of the Phillies game, we needed a win, and it was the bottom of the ninth. It was one of the offensive highlights of the season for me.

I was more surprised by my offensive performance last season than this. Last season gave me the confidence to know that I could do what's gone on this year. I always wanted an opportunity, and Bobby Cox gave that to me last year. That confidence helped me to spring forward into this year.

Consistency for me is a matter of doing the same routine every day, which is something I learned years ago. I have two different routines - one I use for when I'm starting and another I use for when I'm not. I try to stay very routine-oriented.

I do a batting tee routine where I hit a certain number of balls off a high tee, and a certain number of balls off a low tee to right field. I do the same routine when I don't start. I just wait longer to start it.

Staying fresh and ready to come in is easier here, because we're very fortunate with the facilities we have at Turner Field. We have two full batting cages underneath the stadium that we have access to through the dugout.

It has two different kinds of pitching machines. It can throw curveballs, sliders, changeups, and I use the batting tee as much as anyone in baseball. I think it's a flashback to not making the all-star team as a tee-ball player! I always want to be good off the batting tee.

> "EVERY COMPETITOR WANTS TO PLAY EVERY CHANCE THEY GET, BUT I'LL TAKE MY AT-BATS ANY WAY I GET THEM."

As part of my routine, at the end, I hit three balls to right, three balls to left and three up the middle. If I can do those nine in a row, and I won't stop until I hit nine in a row, I know there's nothing physically wrong with my swing. Or at least that's what I've convinced myself of mentally.

I look at film after every at-bat - good or bad. Rob Smith (video coordinator) gets tired of seeing me in the video room. I like to see what the pitcher's doing to me and whether I can pick up anything in my timing.

They say you only have tenths of a second to react to a pitch, but I think if you do preparation, it can slow the game down for you. I feel that if you do the routines, you may not get the hits, but you'll make solid contact consistently.

Mark Teixeira asked me if Dolphin Stadium was a good hitters' park, and I said, "Yeah." Then everyone else told him, "No, it isn't!" I guess I just see the ball well there. They also have two left-handed pitchers, so I know I'm going to play at least one game while I'm there. I've faced them before, and success breeds confidence. My first success last season was against the Marlins. We faced Dontrelle Willis here at home, and I think that's what set me off. A lot of it is coincidence too.

I think our left-field platoon (with Willie Harris) is probably one of the better platoons, if not the best, in baseball right now.

The fact that I'm platooning with someone like Willie is great. It's easy to handle sharing time with someone who's worked his way up from where he's come from, being sent down last year from Boston. I know what that's like, having to battle your way back to the big leagues. He's really easy to root for, and I notice him rooting for me as loudly as anyone else.

Every competitor wants to play every chance they get, but I'll take my at-bats any way I get them. I've enjoyed coming off the bench, and I definitely enjoy when I start. I just remember where I was two years ago - up and down in the Kansas City Royals organization. I'll never complain about any situation Bobby Cox puts me in.

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WELL-STOCKED 'PEN

ABUNDANCE OF STRONG, YOUNG ARMS BODES WELL FOR FUTURE LATE-INNING SUCCESS

ATLANTA BRAVES

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BY JON COOPER

THIS SEASON PROVED TO BE as good for the Braves' bullpen as 2006 was bad.

With youthful exuberance tempered by a measure of experience, the oft-maligned group of pitchers survived injury and tumult to put "relief" back on the asset side of the Braves' roster ledger.

"It's been like night and day," said Tim Hudson when asked to compare the two seasons of relief work. "They've been one of the better bullpens in the league. You've got some really good power arms down there."

Big things were expected from the group heading into 2007 after an off-season facelift. The plan was for additions Mike Gonzalez and Rafael Soriano to help closer Bob Wickman shorten the game and provide one of the best sets of finishers in the majors.

The plan went awry quickly when Gonzalez was lost for the season in May due to elbow surgery. Then the master plan fell apart completely when Wickman was released on Aug. 24 in a surprising move.

"I walked into the clubhouse and saw (Jose) Ascanio was in his (Wickman's) locker and I thought, 'What's going on?'" recalled Peter Moylan. "It was really surprising."

"The only thing Bobby asks of anybody is just to be ready whenever he wants you to play," said Hudson. "Regardless of whether you're a position player, a starting pitcher or a relief pitcher.

"There were times when 'Wicky' probably felt that as a closer you only pitch in closing situations," Hudson continued. "But

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when you're in the bullpen, your job is to come in in relief, and sometimes you have to bring your closer in in non-save situations in order to win important games. That may be an issue that might have been a little tough for him to deal with.

"Obviously, 'Wicky' was a quality reliever, but there were guys in place already and guys in the minors who were going to be able to come in and fill in for him."

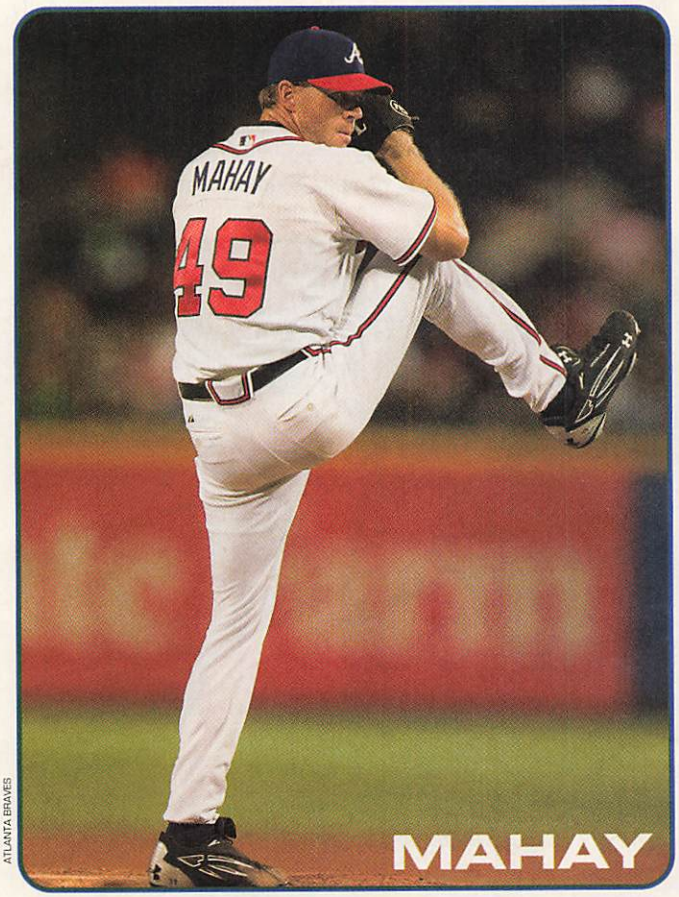
Pitching coach Roger McDowell agreed, at least on the last point.

"They've done a nice job since Bob left," said McDowell, who declined to comment on the circumstances surrounding the veteran closer's final days in Atlanta. "They've been put into a little deeper roles, situations that they hadn't pitched in before. But they've gotten to the point where they're consistently counted on. When you have guys like that down there at the tail end of the game, it gives confidence to the whole ballclub."

Indeed, instead of falling flat, this bunch of relative no-names went about making a name for themselves.

The new recipe for success that's likely to carry over to 2008 features Soriano, side-winding Aussie Peter Moylan, hard-throwing Tyler Yates, a pair of rubber-armed veterans in righty Oscar Villarreal and lefty Ron Mahay, and a pair of newcomers in 27-year-old Manny Acosta and 22-year-old Ascanio.

While these guys may not rank among household names, they did rank among the best bullpens in the majors. Heading into action on Sept. 6, Atlanta's bullpen had combined for a 3.63 ERA, third-lowest in the National League and seventh-best in the majors. Their consistency is impressive. Only once did their monthly ERA stray over 4.00 (4.15 in July), while in 2006, the 'pen pitched under 4.00 just twice and surrendered at least 5.00 runs per game in two



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months. Opposing batting average also was down from .262 to .247, and, with 22 games to go, Atlanta relievers had allowed 205 walks, compared with 248 in 2006.

The Braves' bullpen had blown 17 saves by the beginning of July 2006, but it headed into the second week of September 2007 having blown only 15.

After the departure of Wickman, the closer situation appeared settled with Soriano in the role.

"I didn't think I'd be the closer, but they gave me the opportunity and I try to do the best that I can," said Soriano, who through Sept. 6 had retired 48 of 61 first batters while allowing only two of 12 inherited runners to score and holding opposing batters to a .197 average.

Though the hard thrower struggled with allowing home runs, his confidence never wavered and his willingness to pitch earned him the admiration of teammates.

"I've found out a lot about Raffy this year, just how competitive he is," said Gonzalez, who should return early next season with a personal streak of 30 consecutive save conversions. "That's the kind of guy that I need to have by my side to push me to that next level."

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Outside of Wickman's release, the bullpen's biggest surprise was Moylan. Originally signed by Minnesota as a minor-league free agent in 1996 (and released in 1998), he got a new life after being discovered at the World Baseball Classic. Following a brief stay in Atlanta in 2006, he blossomed in 2007. No one was more surprised than the 28-year-old native of Attadale in Western Australia.

"I expected to be a setup guy or a closer in Richmond, to be honest with you," said Moylan, who started the year at Triple A, got called up to Atlanta on April 14, and came into September leading all major league rookies with a 1.87 ERA and a .200 opponents batting average. "I never expected to spend as much time as I have up here."

What Moylan has been to consistency, Yates has been to durability.

The powerful righty blew past his previous career-high in games (56) on Aug. 12 and was projected to make close to 80 appearances. While he struggled occasionally - especially in July - he never turned down the ball.

"That's the life of a reliever," said Yates, who appeared in 14 games in both July and August, including a stretch of seven games in nine days leading into the All-Star break.

"I was a little tired, but when you go out there that many days in a row, you wear a little bit mentally, and I think that's what happened.

"I think I've improved a lot in the command of my pitches, putting batters away when I get to 0-2 and 1-2," he added. "There are a few places that I could have done better during the year, but I think that mentally I've been a lot tougher, and sometimes your numbers just don't show what's really gone on in a year."

Villarreal was again a key innings-eater (he was second to Moylan through Sept. 6), and his versatility made him especially valuable. He can claim to have pitched in relief in all nine innings this year, holds the team's season-high for strikeouts in an appearance by a reliever (six at Florida on July 1), and has pitched at least two innings in 19 of his 48 appearances.

"I like to pitch. I like to help," said Villarreal, who earned his first career save on Aug. 9 at Shea Stadium against the Mets in

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his 214th career appearance. "Wherever Bobby needs me, I'm there."

Mahay was viewed as something of an afterthought in the Mark Teixeira trade, but he was extremely effective, pitching to a 1.53 ERA and holding opposing hitters to a .164 average. His three-inning appearance on Aug. 2 against Houston was his seventh three-plus-innings appearance in 2007, and the veteran struck out at least one batter in 12 of his first 17 games as a Brave, chalking up 16 strikeouts in 17 2/3 innings.

While the veterans set the example, the next generation was paying close attention, and is ready to follow that lead.

"There are obviously some terrific arms - Manny Acosta, Jose Ascanio," said McDowell. "Then there's the progress of Joey Devine. Joey's had a terrific year in both Double-A and Triple-A. He's coming up here knowing what it takes to pitch in the big leagues."

The duo of Acosta and Ascanio were indeed superb. Acosta allowed only two runs in his first 10 appearances and debuted by throwing zeroes in his first eight outings (9 2/3 innings) while holding opponents to a .171 average. Ascanio has also shown an impressive array of pitches in three separate stints in Atlanta, recording nine strikeouts in 10 1/3 innings.

The big question about the bullpen's future is who will win the closer's job. That was a possibility for Gonzalez when he was acquired, and it is a challenge he's up for when he returns next year, if he can wait that long.

"[Patience is] something I'm learning right now," he said with a laugh. "This is the longest period of time that I've not played baseball, and I'm going crazy. So I'm trying to figure out things to do and try to be there as much as possible. If I've got to be a cheerleader, that's what I'm going to try and do until I'm able to throw."

Not to be overlooked is Octavio Dotel, who quickly went on the disabled list with a strained shoulder after being acquired July 31 but also has closing experience. Throw in newly acquired lefty Royce Ring, and the bullpen really is something to brag about.

"Soriano is dominant, and I think the team has a lot of confidence in getting the ball to him," said Yates. "The bridge - the seventh and eighth innings - whoever 'Skip' (Cox) hands the ball to, I think the team has a lot of confidence that we'll get to the ninth inning and nail down a win."

What a difference a year makes.

IS LA RUSSA PLANNING TO TAKE OFF A YEAR?

IF TONY LA RUSSA LEAVES the Cardinals for another managing position, he almost certainly will depart without longtime pitching coach **Dave Duncan**, who is signed through 2008, and general manager **Walt Jocketty**, who is signed through '08 with a club option for '09. A year off might make sense for La Russa, who turns 63 on Oct. 4. He could use the time to recharge while waiting for his options to increase – a strategy that worked well for two of his peers, **Jim Leyland** and **Lou Piniella**.

The Braves' trade options if they lose **Andruw Jones as** a free agent would include the Red Sox's **Coco Crisp**, Yankees' **Johnny Damon** and Royals' **David DeJesus**. The Padres' **Mike Cameron** remains a leading free-agent possibility. He lives outside of Atlanta. At this stage of his career, Damon is better in left than he is in center.

During a series in Baltimore, the Red Sox stuck an exercise wheel for a gerbil on the top of their bench in the dugout. Taped to the wheel was a sign that said, "Red Sox second baseman prepares for stretch run." The joke made sense, considering that Sox manager **Terry Francona** refers to second baseman **Dustin Pedroia** as "a little rodent." Pedroia's brash yet endearing personality makes him popular in the Sox clubhouse.

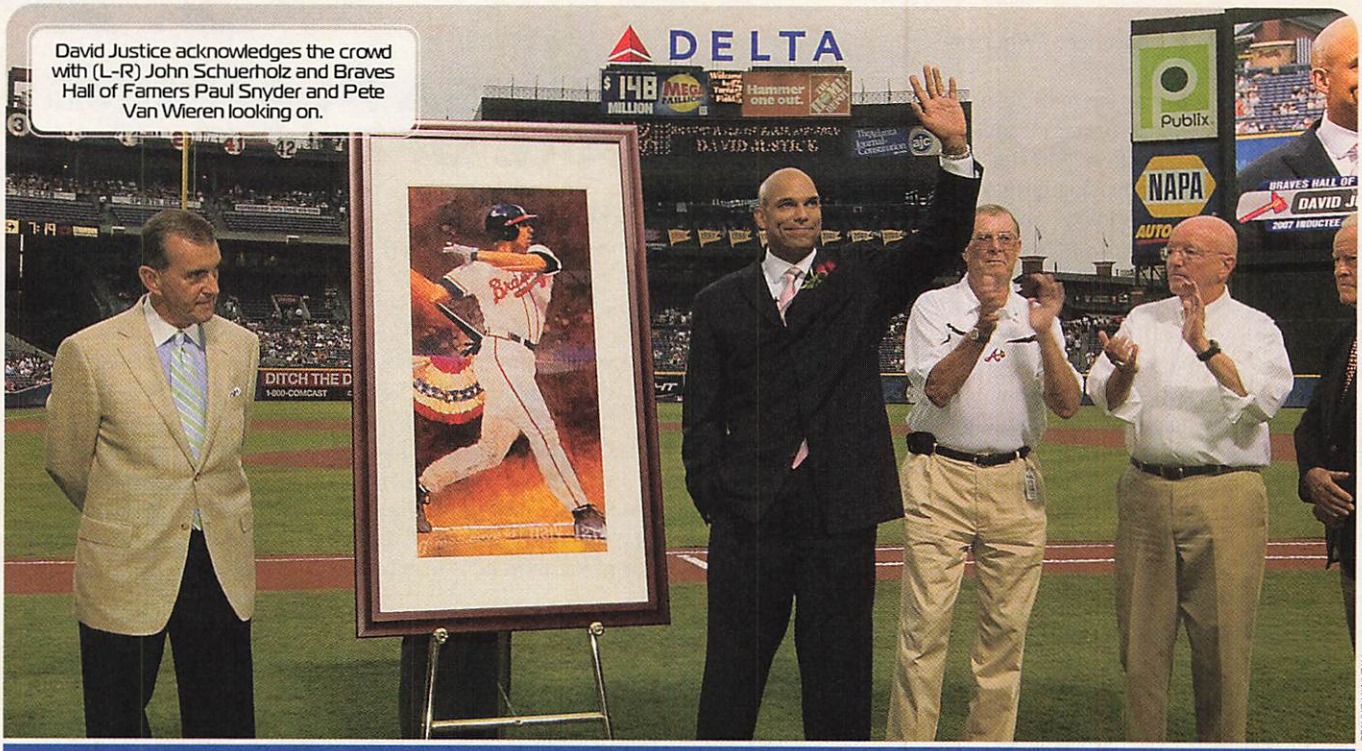
Too much was made of **Ryan Howard**'s "pursuit" of **Adam Dunn**'s single-season record of 195 strikeouts. For all his whiffs, Howard ranked among the National League leaders in on-base/slugging percentage. And the Phillies didn't exactly suffer – they led the NL in runs. Sabermetricians point out that strikeouts aren't significantly worse than other outs, though the bunching of high-strikeout hitters together can be a problem – unless the on-base percentages of those hitters is good.

For all the talk about the pitching injuries with the Phillies, Dodgers and Braves, the Rockies might have contended for the NL West title if they hadn't lost three starters – righthanders **Rodrigo Lopez**, **Jason Hirsh** and **Aaron Cook** - during the first 16 days of August. The Rockies decided against making a claim on righthander **Esteban Loaiza** before the Dodgers had a chance to get him from the A's. Some rival executives question Loaiza's work habits and consider him a poor influence on younger pitchers.

The recent griping from Orioles shortstop **Miguel Tejada** and second baseman **Brian Roberts** reflects their frustration with losing – a distinct contrast from third baseman **Melvin Mora**, whose apparent indifference is a source of irritation to club officials and even rival executives. "He doesn't have a fast-twitch muscle left in his body," one AL exec says.

And finally, my favorite **Terry Ryan** story: In 2001, Ryan declined to pursue the Blue Jays' GM opening even though Major League Baseball was threatening to eliminate the Twins through contraction. I called Ryan with the intention of writing a column praising his loyalty. My questions made him uncomfortable. He never, ever sought praise. "Don't make me puke," he warned. That's Ryan – blunt, honest and forever humble. Everything you've read and heard about him is true.

- KEN ROSENTHAL IS A SENIOR WRITER FOR FOXSPORTS.COM



David Justice acknowledges the crowd with (L-R) John Schuerholz and Braves Hall of Famers Paul Snyder and Pete Van Wieren looking on.

ATLANTA BRAVES

JUSTICE PREVAILS

NEW INDUCTEE ENTERTAINS ROYALLY DURING INDUCTION CEREMONY

BY JAY BUSBEE

WHATEVER ELSE CAN BE SAID about David Justice, it all should start with this: The man knows how to grab an audience.

The newest inductee of the Braves' Hall of Fame, Justice had the capacity crowd at Turner Field's 755 Club laughing, reminiscing, and even choking up during the Aug. 17 induction ceremony. The event also included a salute to the 50th anniversary of the 1957 Milwaukee Braves' World Championship, drawing a neat parallel between champions of the recent and distant past.

Fans in attendance at the luncheon enjoyed the company of the current team. Every one of the 40-plus tables featured at least one Brave or former Brave. Fans took advantage of every instant of the up-close-and-personal dining. Kelly Johnson had his tablemates doubled over with laughter at jokes and anecdotes, and Mark Teixeira's food grew cold as he stopped every three steps in the buffet line to pose for pictures.

This year's ceremonies marked the first induction of a member of the '90s-era team into the Hall of Fame. Two years ago, Justice was clearly the star of the show when the Braves honored the 1995 World Champions. This year, with the spotlight all to himself, he appeared touched and, at times, almost overwhelmed with the honor of induction.

Joe Simpson, Bobby Cox and Chipper Jones set the stage for Justice. Simpson offered a recounting of Justice's career accomplishments, and Cox and Jones gave some behind-the-scenes accounts of the Justice that fans didn't see.

Cox wanted Justice's bat in the majors so badly that he brought him up to play first base after getting exactly one game of experience at the position in the minors.

"His first ballgame, there were two outs in the ninth, man on third, we were going to win," Cox said with a laugh. "The ball was hit to [Jeff] Blauser, Blauser threw a perfect strike to first, it went off the end of Justice's glove, Braves lose."

Cox noted that things would get somewhat better in the days ahead.

Jones, Justice's heir apparent as a Braves leader, recounted how Justice served as a role model for him.

"David made it very clear from the start that he was going to be accessible, help me out as much as possible, give me the knowledge I needed to be successful," Jones said. "David, I can never thank you enough for that."

Justice then took the podium to a standing ovation from the 400-plus fans in attendance. The cockiness that Atlanta fans recalled from the 1990 National League Rookie of the Year is still there, but with the passage of a decade, Justice is now more reflective. The player once criticized for a me-first attitude shared the credit for his career as soon as he took the microphone.

Justice talked about the key roles that his mother, his Little League coaches, and Braves scout and fellow franchise Hall of Famer Paul Snyder played in shaping his baseball destiny. Justice laughed about not playing baseball seriously until college, when he decided that playing basketball entailed too much running.

"Just think, if I'd decided to give that running another day or two," he joked, "I never would have been a professional baseball player."

After telling the story of his discovery by Snyder, Justice had the crowd bobbing with laughter with anecdotes about minor league players who would soon become household names - Lemke, Gant, Blauser - but were at the time, like Justice, just talented kids with oversized dreams.

Justice laughed in describing his travails trying to play right field with a runaway freight train - Ron Gant - in center. And he gave the definitive account of his infamous callout of the Atlanta fans before Game 6 of the 1995 World Series.

"The Cleveland fans were standing every pitch, and our fans were kind of treating it like a tennis match," Justice recalled. "A lot of people agreed with me after I left, but nobody had my back that night. What I was trying to say was, if our fans get behind us, they'll push us over the top."

BRAVES HALL OF FAME

1999
HANK AARON, OF (1954-74)
EDDIE MATHEWS, 3B (1952-66)
PHIL NIEKRO, RHP (1964-83, '87)
WARREN SPAHN, LHP (1942, '46-64)

2000
DALE MURPHY, OF (1976-90)
TED TURNER, OWNER (1976-2000)

2001
LOU BURDETTE, RHP (1951-63)
ERNIE JOHNSON, BROADCASTER (1962-99)

2002
BILL BARTHOLOMAY, EXECUTIVE (1962-PRESENT)
JOHNNY SAIN, RHP (1942, '46-51)

2003
DEL CRANDALL, C (1949-50, '53-63)

2004
TOMMY HOLMES, OF (1942-51)
KID NICHOLS, RHP (1890-1901)
SKIP CARAY, BROADCASTER (1976-PRESENT)
PETE VAN WIEREN, BROADCASTER (1976-PRESENT)

2005
HERMAN LONG, SS (1890-1902)
PAUL SNYDER, SCOUT/EXECUTIVE (1966-PRESENT)

2006
RALPH GARR, OF (1968-75)
BILL LUCAS, EXECUTIVE (1966-79)

2007
DAVID JUSTICE, OF (1989-96)

That night, Justice played a game like no other in his entire life. Booed by his hometown fans, he prayed in the on-deck circle.

"I said, 'God, you've put me in a lot of tough situations, and you've always brought me through,'" Justice said. "When they announced my name, I heard a couple people cheering, and I said, 'I'm going to play for those people tonight.'"

That game, he walked twice, doubled, and hit the decisive home run in the 1-0 victory that won the Series. He didn't make an out the entire night.

Less than 18 months later, though, Justice was gone from Atlanta, traded to the Indians. But on his induction day, he took the opportunity to heal old wounds, once and for all.

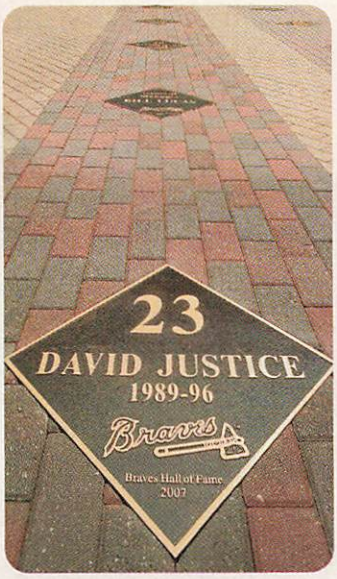
"I left here with my heart broken," he said. "But today, my heart has been mended."

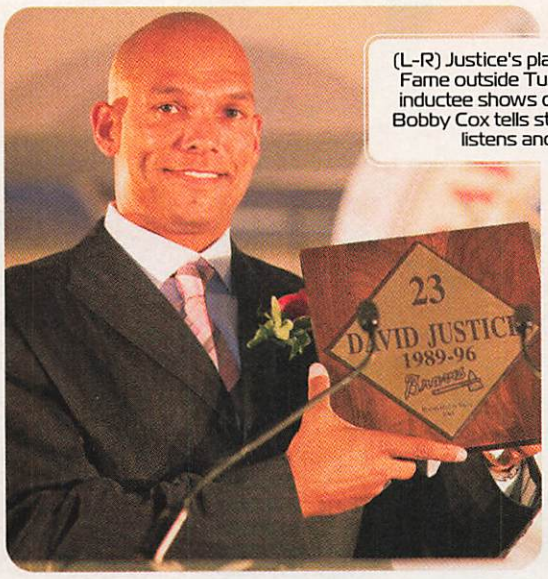
The day also featured a commemoration of the half-century anniversary of the 1957 Braves' World Champion-ship. Ernie Johnson, a pitcher on that '57 squad, led the remembrances of the team, which featured Hall of Famers Warren Spahn, Red Schoendienst, Eddie Mathews, and a 23-year-old Hank Aaron, who won the National League MVP that year.

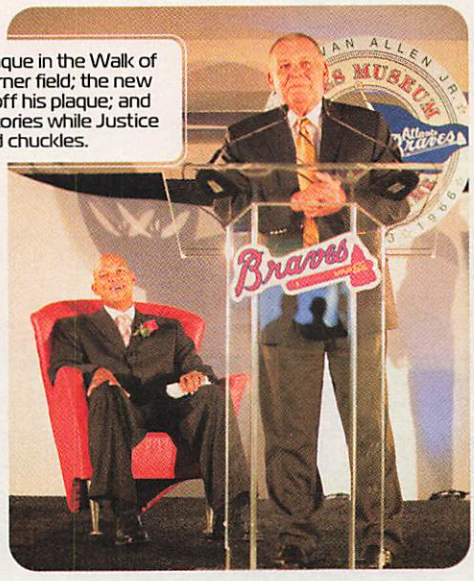
Johnson concluded on a bittersweet note.

"We were like a lot of the Braves teams today. We had a lot of home-grown products," he said. "I hope the guys that are here today [on the Braves] develop some friendships. Because all of a sudden, it's over... Baseball players should never forget where they played, whether it was the major leagues or D-league ball."

The induction ceremony made it clear - the fans won't forget either, not even after 50 years.

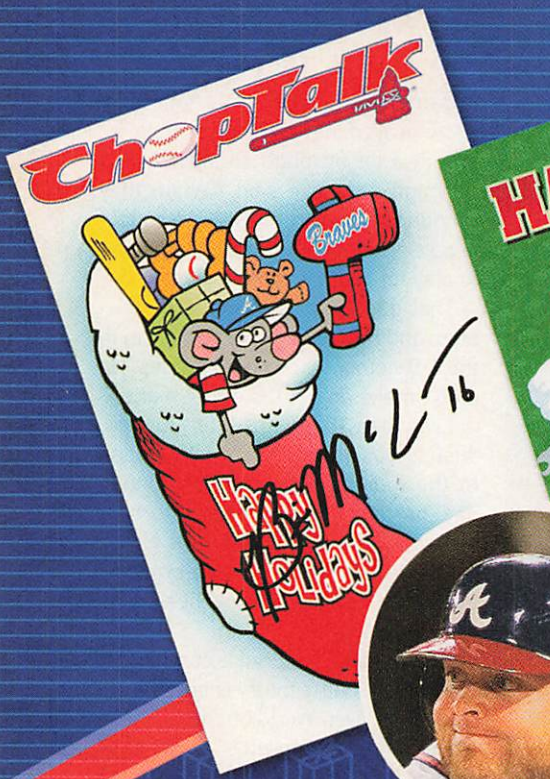






(L-R) Justice's plaque in the Walk of Fame outside Turner field; the new inductee shows off his plaque; and Bobby Cox tells stories while Justice listens and chuckles.

PHOTOS: ALLISON SHERIFFS



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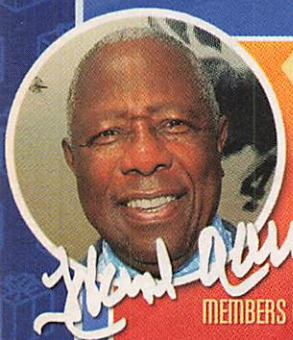

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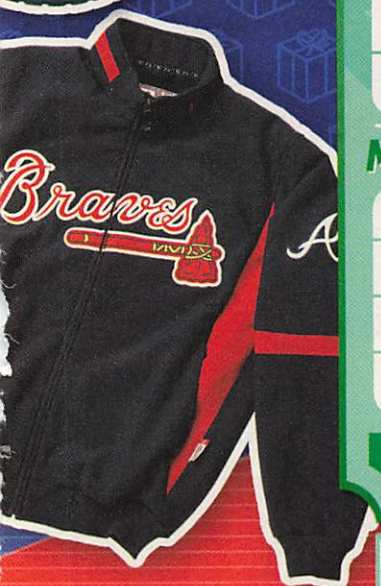

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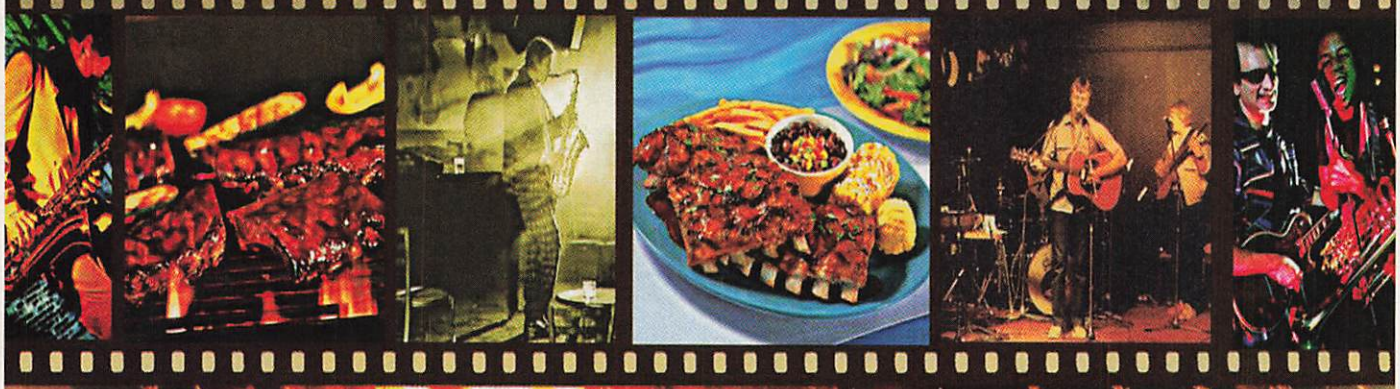

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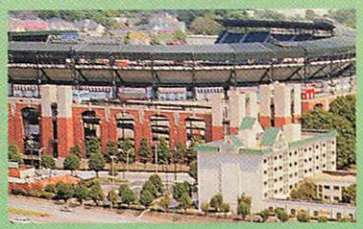

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MOYLAN STANDS OUT AMONG NL ROOKIE PITCHERS

BY STEVE FALL

PETER MOYLAN'S AUG. 28 outing versus Florida typified his impressive season. He entered in the seventh inning with the Braves trailing, 3-1. By throwing two scoreless innings, he kept the team in the game. That enabled them to tie the score and force extra innings. But when Atlanta lost, 4-3, in 11, Moylan did not receive a save, win, or a hold.

Since he rarely pitches in save or even hold situations, Moylan won't get consideration for National League Rookie of the Year. However, none of the league's rookie pitchers has had as much success this season. Unfortunately, The Sporting News stopped naming a separate Rookie Pitcher of the Year in 2003.

Moylan led all major league rookies with his sparkling 1.95 ERA and .201 batting average allowed through Aug. 28 (minimum: 70 innings). No other NL rookie came close to his ERA figure. Among the 11 first-year pitchers with 70 innings, Phillies starter Kyle Kendrick (3.89 ERA) came next. Moylan also topped rookies in both leagues with 61 appearances.

Kendrick, who had a 7-3 mark in 14 starts, and Giants starter Tim Lincecum (7-4, 3.94 ERA) have both turned in good years. Florida setup man Matt Lindstrom had a 3.25 ERA and 16 holds, versus Moylan's four holds. But none of those pitchers get the edge over Moylan.

The Australian-born righty excelled when entering games in tough spots. Among the 32 runners he's inherited, only nine have scored. Moylan also has been superb in close games. In situations with the game tied or the Braves ahead or behind one run, his batting average allowed dropped to .184. Moylan surrendered just one home run in 107 plate appearances with the game this close.

Moylan has performed at a top level despite a heavy workload. He pitched 18 times on consecutive days. He also worked more than one inning on 18 occasions.

Should Moylan keep his ERA below 2.00 this season, he'll join Chris Hammond (0.95 in 2002) as the only Braves relievers to post ERAs below 2.00 in 70 innings since 1981. If Moylan sustains his superb ERA and reaches 80 innings pitched by season's end – he already had 73 2/3 – his feat becomes even more noteworthy. He would become the third reliever in Atlanta Braves history with a sub-2.00 ERA in that much work. Only Rick Camp (1.91, 1980) and Tom House (1.92, 1974) have done this.

ALLISON SHIRREFFS

Peter Moylan could become just the third Atlanta reliever ever to post a sub-2.00 ERA while working 80 or more innings.

While Yunel Escobar also figured to draw limited consideration for Rookie of the Year, he provided a good bat and solid defense. Among major league rookies with at least 200 at-bats, Escobar posted the second-highest batting average (.329). Only the Brewers' Ryan Braun (.333) topped him. The Cuban infielder's .371 on-base percentage ranked third among NL rookies with 200 at-bats.

Escobar, who had two home runs and 23 RBIs, lacked the power numbers of other top NL rookies. Braun (.333 BA, 25 HR, 66 RBI), Troy Tulowitzki (.292-18-72), and Hunter Pence (.321-12-46) all had high averages with far more pop.

The Braves had gone 11-13 since Edgar Renteria injured his ankle on Aug. 2. Had Escobar not stepped up at shortstop in his place, things could have been worse. He had a .330 average during this period.

The Braves rolled up the NL's second-most runs (670) through Aug. 28. The top of the batting order gets much of the credit for that offensive success. Atlanta's leadoff hitters ranked fourth in the NL in on-base percentage (.357), and the club's second-place hitters (.401 OBP) topped all teams by a huge margin. The Cardinals came next with a .366 figure. Atlanta's third-place hitters – usually Chipper Jones – also reached consistently as shown by a .397 on-base percentage, second in the league.

Kelly Johnson, Willie Harris, Renteria and Escobar have filled the two top spots during the season. All put up impressive on-base percentage numbers. They combined for a .384 OBP and a .311 batting average.

Their performance helped the Braves outscore foes, 97-78, in the first inning. Among NL clubs, only the Phillies crossed the plate more often (98) in the first inning.

The lineup's tablesetters gave the middle of the order numerous opportunities to drive home runs. Andruw Jones, who filled the cleanup spot until Mark Teixeira's arrival, batted with 424 runners on base this season. That led all NL hitters. Jeff Francoeur, who normally bats fifth or sixth, came to the plate with 386 baserunners aboard. That placed eighth in the league.

When Billy Best, a Braves area supervisor scout, turned in his leased car recently, he'd put more than 130,000 miles on it in just 20 months.

BILL BALLEW

BEATING THE BUSHES

AN INSIDE LOOK AT HOW A SCOUT DOES HIS JOB

BY BILL BALLEW

AS OWNER OF THE CINCINNATI REDS, the late Marge Schott became a free-flowing fountain of foolish opinions and observations. Yet for all of her missteps, she hit the jackpot of inane ignorance when, after firing much of her scouting staff, she explained, "All they do is watch baseball games."

More conventional wisdom about the scouting profession is John Schuerholz's sentiment that scouting and player development are "the lifeblood of the organization." Amateur scouts comb the country - and the world - evaluating players from high school and collegiate ranks to help scouting director Roy Clark make the best decisions possible in the June draft. Players that sign with the team enter the farm system, with the cream literally rising to the top. This season, no fewer than 13 players on the Atlanta roster were homegrown products.

Yet contrary to Schott's assessment, scouts do much more than watch games. The job requires them to be equal parts talent evaluator, public relations man, psychologist, navigator and weather forecaster. Scouts also have to be visionaries, capable of making clear recommendations while constantly putting their reputations on the line. Said author Kevin Kerrane in his book The Dollar Sign on the Muscle, "It's a unique job. Sometimes I think scouts are like the last real Americans."

Few men in the game handle the multi-tasking responsibilities of a scout better than Billy Best. A college coach for 18 years, Best is in his sixth season with the Braves. His coverage area includes the Carolinas and Virginia south of Interstate 64. Sixteen players currently under contract with the Braves were scouted and signed by Best, who believes the key to success centers on organizational skills.

"You look back on the mistakes you made and it seems like most of them are based on your ability to organize your time," said Best, an East Carolina University product who played five seasons in the Kansas City farm system. "My goal is to have every player identified by the end of the calendar year. The fall is critical, because it sets up what you're going to do in the spring. Last year in my area, there were 133 kids drafted, and you only have 120 days to see guys in the spring."

Best lives outside of Raleigh, N.C., near the center of his heavily-populated territory. To have success, he must out-work the competition, namely the scouts from other major league organizations. A day off is rare, and nonexistent once the first pitch is thrown in February.

"Everything I do is based on the draft," said the 49-year-old Best. "The new year starts the day after the draft in June and continues for the next 12 months."

Prior to the late 1990s, scouts worked an average of eight to 10 months a year. That is no longer the case, particularly for someone with Best's work ethic. Eight to 10 days *annually* might be all Best takes off in his search for what could be the next big thing, or even a complementary part, to the Braves' winning ways.

Mandatory dates on Best's summer calendar are the State

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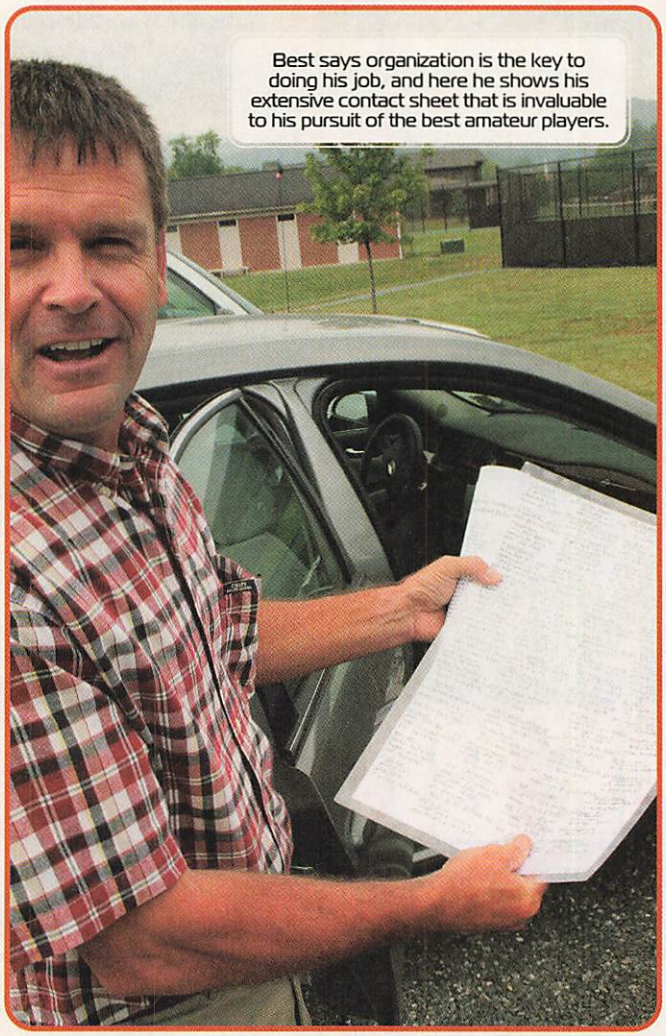

Best says organization is the key to doing his job, and here he shows his extensive contact sheet that is invaluable to his pursuit of the best amateur players.

BILL BALLEW

Games in North Carolina in mid-June and the Commonwealth Games in Virginia a month later. These "showcase" events allow Best and other scouts to see numerous players at one time. Another benefit, particularly regarding national showcases in Atlanta and Florida, is the ability to evaluate how players from their area compete and stack up against the best from other parts of the country.

The summer months are also when Best hosts tryout camps scattered throughout his region. While some amateur scouts have eliminated this ritual, Best considers it a gold mine for younger players wanting to show their raw skills. He also holds invitational camps. In late August, for example, Best welcomed the best players he had seen throughout the summer to Cary, N.C., where he conducted a six-hour, hands-on workout under controlled conditions.

In September and October, the Major League Scouting Bureau arranges "scout days" at colleges. Players run the 60-yard dash, make throws from the outfield, and take cuts in the cage. Pitchers throw around 20 pitches, displaying the speed and movement of their fastballs, the spin on their breaking balls and the depth and fade of their changeups.

Last fall, Best traveled to Greenwood, S.C., for Lander University's scout day when he noticed a young man hanging around the field. As it turned out, Kevin Davis, who had played third base for Lander, had exhausted his eligibility. He had given one of his former teammates a ride to the event, yet lit up Best's radar gun by touching 94 mph when he stepped on the mound.

"Thank goodness there were only three other scouts there," Best said. "I called Roy and he allowed me to sign him that night. We went out to dinner, and Kevin said he was so excited he couldn't eat. Cases like that make you feel like you have to go out and see something every single day."

In addition to traveling to a showcase event or two in Florida during December, Best spends the winter meeting as many of the potential top draft prospects as possible. He will sit down with between 50 and 70 players at their schools or in their homes.

"As with any business, the makeup of an individual is so important in judging long-term success," Best said. "So you get with the kids, and along the way, meet with their coaches, parents and other people that know them well. It helps you get a better read on the player as a person."

Best met Joey Devine, the Braves' first-round draft pick in 2005, nearly three years before Atlanta drafted the North Carolina State product. Best remembers a fellow scout saying, "Someone made a mistake there." The scout felt Devine should have been drafted the previous June, based on how well he was throwing.

There are certain basics that Best must do with all prospects, and one of them is timing players in the 60-yard dash.

BILL BALLEW

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

BIRD DOGS

Serve as contacts for area scouts. Usually consist of retired players and coaches, as well as current high school coaches. Any compensation is based on early recommendations of top players that sign with the organization.

PART-TIME SCOUTS

Provide extra coverage, particularly in large territories, for the draft or for a particular minor league.

AREA SUPERVISORS

Also known as area scouts, they have specific territories, usually covering a few states. While all of the Braves' area supervisors oversee the amateur ranks for the draft, some also are responsible for evaluating players on selected minor league teams in other organizations during June and July.

INTERNATIONAL SCOUTS

Similar to area supervisors, they have responsibilities in covering specific countries, particularly in Latin America.

PROFESSIONAL SCOUTS

Provide constant reports on major league players from all 30 teams, as well as those on Double-A and Triple-A rosters. Evaluations are used for potential trade information and waiver wire acquisitions, as well as advance scouting in certain situations.

CROSS CHECKERS

Provide second and third opinions on amateur players, particularly those expected to go in the first few rounds of the draft. They evaluate players on more of a national scale than a regional one. After the draft, cross checkers expand their horizons to include evaluations of other major league teams, as well as minor leaguers, including those in the Atlanta organization.

ADVANCE SCOUTS

Though not as common as they once were, due to advances in technology, they provide the major league staff with up-to-date reports on every player with an upcoming opponent.

Over the next three seasons, Best spoke frequently with Devine. The more they communicated, the more Best realized what a perfect fit, from both a personal and professional standpoint, Devine would be in the Atlanta organization.

"He's a great kid, a young man anyone would be proud to have as a son," Best said. "I wrote that in my scouting report. It also didn't hurt that he could throw the ball as well as anyone in the country."

By the time the season begins in the spring, Best has made a preliminary ranking of the players and mapped out his travel itinerary, as well as backup plans. His goal is to see the best players at least three times and the marginal prospects twice. He also has to account for a player or two that might appear on the radar screen unexpectedly, all while watching the Weather Channel religiously and making countless calls in hopes that every trip proves productive.

Helping Best cover the area is a network he has established that extends beyond his relationships with various college and high school coaches. He has a part-time assistant in Charleston, S.C., and approximately 40 "bird dogs" who point Best toward a particular player or provide an extra set of eyes for a preliminary evaluation.

While making his final evaluations prior to the draft, Best spends much of his time on the phone. His current cell phone contract provides him with 4,000 minutes for $135. His bill from mid-May to mid-June this past year exceeded $700, with most of his conversations involving the players' "signability." Best must gauge how much desire a young man possesses to play professional baseball and how much money it will take to sign him, if drafted by the Braves. This information must be accurate, for a scout is almost always involved in the subsequent negotiations.

Best and the other scouts form their opinions of a player's ability based on his "tools," or how he executes various aspects of the game. The most basic tools are the ability to hit, hit for power, catch, throw and run. If a player excels in one or more areas, Best studies his history, particularly the statistics, to see how the player has performed in game situations.

"The earlier a scout can get a history on a kid, the better it is for the organization," Best said. "If there's something there, it gives you time for the cross-checkers to come in and evaluate him. That helps you be as accurate as possible in your assessment."

Experience in scouting can generate subtle hints. Best remembers sitting with Braves Hall of Famer Paul Snyder when the long-time Atlanta scouting director became frustrated following a high popup.

"I said, 'Paul, that's just a pop-up,'" Best said. "Paul said, 'If I had been ready with my stopwatch, I'd have a read on his raw power.' Paul taught me that if a player hits a pop-up that stays in the air for seven seconds or more, he has a chance to develop solid major league power or better."

Speed from home to first base was judged at 4.1-4.2 seconds, but the Braves recently adjusted it to 4.2-4.3 as major league average. The average 60-yard dash (the length of running two bases or going from an outfield position to the wall in the gap) speed is 6.9 seconds. On the mound, a mid-level fastball travels 89-90 mph.

Having 50 players from his territory drafted in the first 10 rounds in 2007 meant Best was on the road most of the time. Atlanta's full-time scouts receive new leased cars about every two years. When Best turned in his last vehicle recently, he had driven more than 130,000 miles over the 20 months he had it.

Despite the constant time away from home and the pressures associated with making the right decisions that could involve millions of dollars for the Braves, Best often hears echoes of Schott's comments regarding how fortunate he is to get paid to go to games. And Best admits he thanks his lucky stars every day, even if scouting might be the hardest job he could ever love.

"There's so much work involved to get one guy in the big leagues," Best said. "But because of the great amount of work that goes into this job, it makes me want to be that much more successful."

BY BILL BALLEW

THREE OF SIX AFFILIATES QUALIFY FOR POST-SEASON APPEARANCES

THE BRAVES HAVE NEVER BEEN SHY in admitting that winning at the minor league level is secondary to player development. Yet when player progress and playoff appearances can be combined, the situation is ideal.

That was the case in 2007 when three Braves' affiliates qualified for post-season play. Richmond earned its first playoff appearance since 2004 and only its third in the race for the Governors Cup since last winning the International League championship in 1994. Mississippi, Atlanta's Double-A team, reached the Southern League playoffs for the first time since 2000, when the club was located in Greenville, S.C. Danville, a frequent contender for the Appalachian League title that it won last year, also made the playoffs.

Making their 22nd playoff appearance, the R-Braves advanced to the finals against South Division foe Durham after defeating Scranton-Wilkes Barre in a hard-fought opening series. The teams split the first two games, then Richmond rallied for a 6-4 decision in Game 3 and a 4-3 victory in Game 4. Iker Franco's two-run single in the ninth tied the decisive game before Derrick Arnold's sacrifice fly brought home the deciding run.

ROGER WOOD

Second baseman J.C. Holt batted .421 for Mississippi in the Southern League playoffs, but couldn't prevent the Double-A Braves from being eliminated.

Outfielder Larry Bigbie had five hits in nine at-bats with four RBIs in the series. Shortstop Brent Lillibridge batted .389 with seven hits in 18 trips to the plate. Game 1 starter Jeff Bennett allowed one run in 5 1/3 innings to pick up the first win in the playoffs, while Joey Devine saved all three wins, surrendering one run over 3 2/3 innings, to headline a bullpen that had a 1.93 ERA.

In the Southern League playoffs, the M-Braves lost three of four games in the first round to Montgomery. Mississippi dropped the opening game, 6-5, despite J.C. Holt's 4-for-5 performance with two singles, two doubles, an RBI, a stolen base and three runs scored. Mississippi evened the series at one behind the pitching of Charlie Morton, who gave up one run on three hits through seven innings prior to departing with a 3-1 lead. Josh Burrus, who batted a disappointing .213 during the season, had three hits and three RBIs to pace the offense.

However, Montgomery then advanced to the SL Championship Series by beating the Braves, 6-5 and 12-5. Holt continued his torrid hitting, batting .421 (8-for-19) in the four games. He also scored six runs and had three extra-base hits.

Danville's desires to win back-to-back championships were dashed when Elizabethton swept both games in the Appy League playoffs. The E-Twins won the first game, 2-0, on a two-run homer by Rene Tosoni in the bottom of the 10th inning to spoil an impressive pitching performance by Jose Ortegano and Steve Evarts. In the second game, the D-Braves had their leadoff batter on base in five innings, yet were able to score only one run in the 5-1 loss.

Outfielder Carlos Lee paced the D-Braves with three hits in eight at-bats. Ortegano allowed only two hits and struck out seven in five shutout innings, while Evarts gave up the two-run homer in Game 1 after striking out seven in 4 2/3 innings.

RICHMOND
TRIPLE A

AFTER LEADING the International League's South Division for much of the first four months, the R-Braves concluded the regular season in second place with a 77-64 record, two games behind first-place Durham and 1 1/2 games ahead of Rochester to earn the lone wild-card playoff spot. The R-Braves led the 14-team league with a .271 batting average. Fifty-seven players saw action with Richmond this season...

Outfielder **Doug Clark** led the R-Braves with 15 home runs...

Second baseman **Martin Prado** led all full-season players in the Atlanta organization with a .316 batting average. His average also ranked second in the International League...

Outfielder **Brandon Jones** finished with an overall batting average of .295 between stops at Mississippi and Richmond. Jones, who was named the IL's Player of the Week for Aug. 6-12, had 19 homers and drove in 100 runs. He also batted .353 in his first full month at the Triple-A level...

Shortstop **Brent Lillibridge** led the organization with 42 stolen bases. Twenty-eight of those came at Richmond, which tied for fourth in the IL...Outfielder **Gregor Blanco** led the IL with 81 runs scored... First baseman **Barbaro Canizares** batted .364 with 20 RBIs after being activated from the restricted list on Aug. 1...

After stating his disappointment in August with the lack of progress made by Richmond in securing a developer and location in order to build a new stadium for the Triple-A club, **Mike Plant**, the Braves' executive vice president of business operations, and mayor **L. Douglas Wilder** had a productive meeting during the playoffs. Plant has said on numerous occasions that the Braves want to remain in the Virginia capital. He added recently that the team has a backup plan that could be put into

action soon if city leadership does not move forward with a new facility in order to gain a long-term commitment on both sides.

MISSISSIPPI
DOUBLE A

THE M-BRAVES entered the playoffs after winning the first-half title in the South Division with a Southern League-best 42-28 record. The tables turned on Mississippi in the season's second half when they finished with a 25-44 mark. The M-Braves had a balanced attack, leading the SL with a 3.81 staff ERA and ranking fourth with a .262 batting average...

Few players in the farm system made greater strides this season than **J.C. Holt** and **Diory Hernandez**. The infielders ranked fourth and fifth, respectively, in the organization with batting averages of .309 and .308. Holt, who spent 13 games at Richmond in late May and early June, had 20 stolen bases and hit .312 at Mississippi. Hernandez, who opened the season at Myrtle Beach, had 59 RBIs and 22 steals with the M-Braves...

Outfielder **Carl Loadenthal** placed second in the organization as well as the SL with 40 stolen bases and ranked seventh among Braves farmhands with a .300 batting average. Loadenthal, who won the Carolina League batting title with a .323 average last year, also ranked fourth in the league with 143 hits... **Mark Jurich** finished one off the pace in the SL with 32 doubles...

Clint Sammons led all SL catchers by throwing out 48.1 percent (38 of 79) of would-be basestealers.

DANVILLE COACH MEL ROBERTS DIES

DANVILLE hitting coach Mel Roberts died unexpectedly in the Virginia city on Sept. 1, one day after Danville concluded the Appalachian League playoffs. The 64-year-old Roberts completed his third season with the D-Braves after coaching seven years at Double-A Greenville and the 1999 and 2000 seasons at Richmond.

A member of the South Atlantic League Hall of Fame, Roberts had a long coaching career that began in 1969 in the Philadelphia farm system after the former outfielder played nine seasons of pro baseball. In 1987, as manager of the Bend Bucks in the Northwest League, Roberts was involved in the first regular-season game in organized baseball history in which two African-American managers opposed one another. After leading the Spartanburg Phillies to the SAL title in 1988, Roberts reached the major leagues as the Phillies' first-base coach from 1992-95.

FALL INSTRUCTIONAL LEAGUE ROSTER

PITCHERS
ERIC BARRETT
CALEB BREWER
MICHAEL BROADWAY
BRETT BUTTS
YELIAR CASTRO
KEVIN DAVIS
SCOTT DIAMOND
STEVEN EVARTS
STEVEN FIGUEROA
CORY GEARRIN
THOMAS HANSON
SUNG KI JUNG
TIM LADD
DANIEL LOPEZ
GONZALO LOPEZ
CLAYTON MCMILLAN
MICHAEL MEHLICH
BENINO PRUNEDA
CODY RAILSBACK
RICO REID
SANTOS RODRIGUEZ
MATT SMALL
JULIO TEHERAN

CATCHERS
CHRIS ANDERSON
PHILLIP BRITTON
DANIEL ELORRIAGA-MATRA
BENJI JOHNSON
MATT KENNELLY
JESUS SUCRE

INFIELDERS
ROBERTO ALVAREZ
DANIEL FALCON
MICHAEL FISHER
CHASE FONTAINE
FREDDIE FREEMAN
JON GILMORE
RANDY GRESS
BRANDON HICKS
TRAVIS JONES
COLE MILES
SAMUEL SIME

OUTFIELDERS
WILLIE CABRERA
RASHOD HENRY
JASON HEYWARD
CODY JOHNSON
C.J. LEE
KUYAUNNIS MILES
CONCEPCION RODRIGUEZ
STEPHEN SHULTS
YOHAN SILVA

REHAB
PAUL BUSH
ERIK CORDIER
GREG CREEK
MOISES HERNANDEZ
JOE JOHNSON
CORY RASMUS
CARLOS RIVAS
CHAD RODGERS
JOSE SANTIAGO
JONATHAN VENTERS
L.V. WARE
T.J. WOHLEVER

YEAR END ALL-STARS

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE
MARTIN PRADO, 2B

SOUTHERN LEAGUE
CARL LOADENTHAL
(Best Hustler award)

CAROLINA LEAGUE
KALA KA'AIHUE, 1B
JORDAN SCHAFER, OF

APPALACHIAN LEAGUE
COLE MILES, 2B
CODY JOHNSON, OF
JEFF LOCKE, LHP
NICK FELLMAN, RP
PAUL RUNGE, MGR.

MYRTLE BEACH
ADVANCED A

AFTER CONTENDING for a playoff spot during the first half of August, the Pelicans flew into a hurricane of problems down the stretch by losing 12 of their last 13 games, including their final five. Myrtle Beach finished in third place in the Southern Division during the second half with a 29-41 record. Overall, the team went 59-80.

Jordan Schafer led the minors with 176 hits and tied for sixth with 74 extra-base hits. That production came from a player who entered the season with many scouts wondering if he would ever hit enough to advance to higher levels.

Schafer finished fifth in the CL with a .294 average following a promotion from Rome in early May. He hit .312 overall, second among Atlanta minor leaguers in full-season leagues...

Quentin Davis was the lone Pelican to spend the entire season at Myrtle Beach, resulting in a franchise-record 133 games. He led the team with 37 stolen bases and 65 RBIs and tied for eighth in the minors with a league-high 11 triples...

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CODY JOHNSON

I'M FINALLY ADJUSTING TO PLAYING LEFT FIELD

AFTER EXPERIENCING what I did last year in the Gulf Coast League, I was able to have the kind of season I wanted in Danville. I believe a big reason for the difference was the environment. Playing in Danville is a lot easier than playing in the GCL, which is a completely different story. Everybody that comes from Florida can't believe how much nicer it is here.

I guess the biggest difference is your daily schedule. When you're on the road in the Appy League, you can sleep until three o'clock if you want to. In the GCL, you're back in your hotel room by three or four in the afternoon. That's because you get up at seven and play games at noon. The heat and the entire situation are brutal. At the same time, it's something everyone should have to do once, in order to appreciate what you have later on.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Cody Johnson, the Braves' first-round draft pick in 2006, had a rough start in the Gulf Coast League last year, batting just .184 with 49 strikeouts in 114 at-bats. The 19-year-old leftfielder rebounded to lead the Appalachian League this season with 17 home runs and a .630 slugging percentage, ranking second with 57 RBIs and ninth with a .305 batting average.

This year, I felt like I was doing pretty much what I did in high school aside from the fact that I was playing every day. Playing at night makes everything a lot easier. You're awake and ready to be out there. Personally, I see the ball better at night. During the day, you have glare coming from everywhere and everything.

I also played in front of some pretty good crowds this season for the first time, but that wasn't a big adjustment. No one was in the stands last year in the GCL, and most games this year we had two or three thousand people.

> "I GREW UP WITH THE PHILOSOPHY TO SWING HARD IN CASE YOU HIT IT."

Ironically, for the most part, I don't really see or hear the fans. When you are so involved in the game, at times it can seem like no one is there. I'm sure that might change in the big leagues, where you're talking about tens of thousands of fans.

When I look back on the recent past, it's amazing how fast things have happened. I started to come into my own during my sophomore season of high school, and things carried over into my junior year and then playing in Atlanta for the East Cobb program. I started swinging a wood bat with East Cobb and really developed the swing I have now. Some people say I hit the ball hard, but I don't judge myself by that. I grew up with the philosophy to swing hard in case you hit it.

One thing I really like about pro ball is hitting with wood. I love hitting with wood so much more than I ever did hitting with metal. While that hasn't been a big adjustment, the pitching has been. Every pitcher in pro ball is good. They all have fairly good command, can throw more than one pitch for strikes, and can locate their pitches. Guys at this level will make the occasional mistake, and that's the pitch you have to jump on.

I guess the biggest adjustment in pro ball has come on defense. I played mostly first base in high school, but the Braves have moved me to left field. I feel like I finally figured it out. When I first moved out there, I was clueless. I had never played left field, and I had a tough time with the angles off the bat. I would see a fly ball and I was completely lost. But the more games I've gone out there, the more comfortable I've become and the easier it's gotten. I feel like I can hold my own out there now.

As far as what I'm working on, it's everything. Obviously what gets you promoted is your bat. If you can't hit, you're not going to play. That's my primary focus - getting my stroke right and not getting into too many slumps.

I'm determined to do whatever it takes to keep living this dream.

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Tommy Hanson won only five games between stops with Rome and Myrtle Beach, but the hard-throwing righthander led the organization with 154 strikeouts and ranked sixth with a 3.32 ERA...

Closer **Sung Ki Jung** finished second in the league with 22 saves in 24 opportunities prior to a promotion to Mississippi with a week left in the regular season. Jung did not allow an earned run in his last 21 appearances with the Pelicans...

Despite receiving a promotion to Mississippi on July 24, **Kala Ka'aihue** had enough at-bats to qualify for the batting title, with the first baseman placing fourth in the CL with a .298 average. He also placed second with 22 home runs and led the league with a .410 on-base percentage and a .583 slugging percentage.

ROME
CLASS A

TYLER FLOWERS had an impressive full season in the South Atlantic League while tying for second in the organization with 70 RBIs and ranking eighth with a .298 batting average. Flowers was the Braves' most-consistent hitter in the second half, when he batted .328 with 11 home runs and 54 RBIs

Catcher **Phillip Britton** attracted raves for his performance, particularly in the second half. Britton had 17 RBIs in July and six home runs in August before being promoted to Mississippi for the playoffs...

Jon Mark Owings overcame a rough start at the plate to lead the team with 16 home runs. Eleven of Owings' homers came after the all-star break...

Shortstop **Brandon Hicks** and second baseman **Travis Jones** were solid additions to the Rome roster in July and helped solidify the team's late-season success. Hicks, Atlanta's third-round draft pick in June out of Texas A&M, displayed an impressive package of tools while hitting.313, including 11 (of 37) multi-hit games. A product of the University of South Carolina, Jones who was drafted in the seventh round in 2007, had 10 home runs and 27 RBIs in 46 games with Rome.

Cole Rohrbough, who was promoted from Danville in early August, dominated the Appalachian League and continued his strong performance in the SAL. In his first five starts with Rome, the lefthander, who signed with the Braves in May as a draft-and-follow pick from 2006, went 2-0 with a 0.78 ERA...

Jamie Richmond ranked seventh in the SAL with a 3.05 ERA and won six of his last

eight decisions.

DANVILLE
ROOKIE ADVANCED

SECOND BASEMAN **Cole Miles** won the league batting title with a .333 average and tied for the league lead with 78 hits.

Left-handed pitcher **Jose Ortegano** led the league with a 1.48 ERA while going 6-1, and fellow lefties **Edgar Osuna** and **Jeff Locke** ranked third and fourth, respectively, with ERAs of 2.47 and 2.66...

Nick Fellman's 16 saves led the Appy League.

GULF COAST
ROOKIE

THREE DAYS after signing with the Braves, first-round draft pick **Jason Heyward** homered in his professional debut (and third at-bat) against the Indians. The rightfielder hit safely in six of his eight games in the Gulf Coast League, including a three-hit, two-double performance on Aug. 20. He earned a late promotion to Danville, where he hit safely in all four games he played...

Shortstop **Samuel Sime** led the GCL Braves entry with a .295 batting average, which tied for ninth in the Atlanta organization. His 64 hits tied for third in the GCL...

Outfielder **Rashod Henry** finished the season on a strong note with a seven-game hitting streak, going 12-for-28.

ORGANIZATIONAL

A CHANGE IN THE DRAFT RULES required all draft selections to be signed by Aug. 15 or else the teams would lose the rights to those players. Atlanta did not sign two players taken in the first 10 rounds - righthanders **Josh Fields** of the University of Georgia (second round) and **Colby Shreve** of the Community College of Southern Nevada (eighth round).

FALL BALL

ROME MANAGER **Randy Ingle** will manage the Honolulu Sharks in the Hawaiian Winter Baseball League. Ingle's players include four Braves farmhands: **Tyler Flowers** (1B/C), **Phillip Britton** (C), **Kris Medlen** (RHP) and **Tyler Wilson** (LHP).

The Arizona Fall League will host eight Braves on the Peoria Javelinas. Pitchers **Ryan Basner**, **Charlie Morton**, **Michael Nix** and **Zack Schreiber** will join catcher **Clint Sammons**, second baseman **J.C. Holt**, shortstop **Brent Lillibridge** and outfielder **Brandon Jones**.

FARM STATISTICS FINAL

RICHMOND 77-64
INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE TRIPLE A | THE DIAMOND (804) 359-4444

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Bigbie, Larry (OF)	.253	59	186	28	47	11	2	2	24	20	38	5
Blanco, Gregor (OF)	.282	124	464	81	131	18	5	3	35	63	85	23
Bohn, T.J. (OF)	.241	46	145	20	35	8	0	1	14	21	41	8
Canizares, Barbaro (1B)	.344	49	163	24	56	13	1	3	34	12	28	0
Clark, Doug (OF)	.275	134	451	75	124	23	4	15	69	59	91	20
Franco, Iker (C)	.220	60	177	16	39	8	0	2	27	20	33	0
Jones, Brandon (OF)	.300	44	170	26	51	12	1	4	26	17	36	5
Koonce, Graham (1B)	.224	58	183	22	41	9	1	10	42	25	53	0
Lillibridge, Brent (SS)	.287	87	321	47	92	14	2	10	41	20	59	28
McCarthy, Bill (OF)	.224	49	165	19	37	7	2	5	18	14	45	2
Mendez, Carlos (1B)	.278	82	263	29	73	19	0	6	35	8	37	0
Miller, Corky (C)	.210	64	181	12	38	8	0	4	25	25	26	4
Orr, Pete (INF/OF)	.240	43	154	26	37	6	4	1	8	14	39	7
Pena, Brayan (C/1B/OF)	.301	94	345	42	104	20	2	6	48	19	38	5
Prado, Martin (INF)	.316	103	395	61	125	23	3	4	41	34	41	5
Timmons, Wes (3B)	.256	120	355	47	91	18	0	5	52	25	29	8

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Acosta, Manny	9-3	2.26	40	0	12	59.2	46	18	15	35	56	.218
Baerlocher, Ryan	2-4	4.25	10	9	0	53.0	60	25	25	14	32	.290
Barry, Kevin	5-7	4.14	24	22	0	113.0	118	59	52	41	83	.277
Basner, Ryan	4-5	4.31	29	4	1	79.1	88	43	38	26	70	.288
Bennett, Jeff	3-5	3.35	36	6	1	86.0	84	32	32	34	45	.266
Boyer, Blaine	4-3	4.30	21	12	2	73.1	76	40	35	50	62	.288
Devine, Joey	3-0	1.64	17	0	4	22.0	15	5	4	6	27	.188
Hernandez, Buddy	9-3	3.13	47	1	3	74.2	76	30	26	18	71	.264
Hodges, Trey	6-6	4.72	30	20	1	122.0	125	70	64	63	81	.269
Johnson, Jonathan	1-4	6.45	10	9	0	44.2	57	33	32	21	26	.322
Lerew, Anthony	1-0	1.37	5	5	0	26.1	20	5	4	8	15	.211
Reyes, Jo-Jo	4-0	1.00	6	6	0	36.0	25	7	4	12	39	.192
Scalamandre, Rich	0-4	5.60	22	0	1	35.1	40	26	22	15	18	.296
Schreiber, Zach	1-1	2.43	24	0	1	33.1	25	12	9	11	38	.205
Smith, Dan	3-5	5.43	14	11	0	58.0	58	35	35	39	39	.267

MISSISSIPPI 67-72
SOUTHERN LEAGUE AA | TRUSTMARK PARK (601) 664-7600

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Bohn, T.J. (OF)	.224	23	85	15	19	3	0	1	6	14	23	3
Burrus, Josh (OF)	.213	91	239	30	51	10	0	6	32	32	82	8
Creek, Greg (1B)	.246	72	232	30	57	15	0	1	17	27	58	2
Esquivel, Matt (OF)	.247	98	372	66	92	16	2	19	70	46	97	15
Hernandez, Diory (SS/2B)	.307	115	433	50	133	25	1	7	59	29	68	22
Holt, J.C. (2B)	.312	94	385	47	120	17	5	0	22	40	77	20
Jones, Brandon (OF)	.293	94	365	58	107	21	6	15	74	44	84	12
Jurich, Mark (1B/OF)	.268	114	373	46	100	32	3	7	63	36	62	1
Kaaihue, Kala (1B)	.127	33	118	14	15	5	1	0	8	11	51	0
Lillibridge, Brent (SS)	.275	52	204	31	56	8	3	3	17	20	60	14
Loadenthal, Carl (OF)	.300	129	476	72	143	17	5	0	31	62	80	40
Pope, Van (3B)	.223	123	421	48	94	23	4	6	43	36	77	10
Rozema, Mike (INF)	.265	69	189	25	50	5	2	5	25	15	42	6
Sammons, Clint (C)	.243	83	296	27	72	10	0	5	36	26	72	1
Serrano, Ray (C)	.301	35	123	21	37	12	2	3	15	9	20	2
Young, Matt (OF)	.242	33	95	6	23	4	1	0	15	10	18	0

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Ascanio, Jose	2-2	2.54	44	1	10	78.0	66	26	22	18	71	.234
Baerlocher, Ryan	2-1	3.57	7	7	0	45.1	51	18	18	7	31	.302
Bueno, Francisley	4-6	3.67	22	19	0	112.2	132	55	46	26	77	.293
Devine, Joey	2-4	2.06	33	0	16	35.0	26	9	8	13	51	.211
Harrison, Matt	5-7	3.39	20	20	0	116.2	118	51	44	34	78	.264
Hernandez, Moises	2-2	5.94	10	10	0	50.0	60	39	33	27	20	.294
Morton, Charlie	4-6	4.29	41	6	0	79.2	80	41	38	37	67	.270
Nelson, Brad	5-1	3.77	29	5	0	76.1	69	34	32	20	51	.240
Nix, Michael	4-6	2.33	44	0	0	69.2	57	25	18	30	73	.226
Parr, James	4-5	4.59	18	16	0	98.0	111	51	50	25	75	.295
Reyes, Jo-Jo	8-1	3.56	13	13	0	73.1	63	31	29	35	71	.240
Schreiber, Zach	3-5	2.22	34	0	5	44.2	26	13	11	22	38	.173
Smith, Dan	4-2	1.94	9	9	0	51.0	37	14	11	20	41	.204
Villa, Kelvin	8-12	5.39	28	28	0	143.2	169	94	86	66	121	.294
Wilkerson, Wes	1-3	7.67	18	0	1	27.0	40	25	23	10	21	.345
Winkelsas, Joe	1-2	2.55	14	0	0	24.2	22	13	7	9	21	.232

FARM STATISTICS

FINAL

MYRTLE BEACH 59-80

CAROLINA LEAGUE
ADVANCED A

COASTAL FEDERAL FIELD
(843) 918-6002

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Alvarez, Roberto (OF/1B)	.291	101	385	49	112	20	3	6	50	24	80	6
Arnold, Derrick (INF)	.219	104	333	37	73	14	1	3	23	14	64	11
Bennett, Paul (INF)	.225	59	173	20	39	9	1	1	13	35	58	9
Cabrera, Willie (OF)	.251	68	251	28	63	7	1	2	24	24	31	2
Camarena, Jose (C)	.225	81	276	29	62	13	0	5	37	31	75	4
Campbell, Eric (3B)	.221	81	298	47	66	13	0	14	49	36	48	6
Davis, Quentin (OF)	.261	134	495	55	129	10	11	4	65	31	73	37
Fisher, Michael (SS)	.250	30	120	15	30	4	0	1	13	10	21	0
Fontaine, Chase (3B/OF)	.205	22	78	6	16	4	0	0	7	8	26	1
Kaaihue, Kala (1B)	.298	89	309	57	92	20	1	22	61	53	92	2
Roberts, J.D. (OF/1B)	.199	81	246	18	49	8	0	2	20	19	72	2
Sammons, Clint (C)	.269	23	78	13	21	6	0	4	13	10	14	1
Schafer, Jordan (OF)	.294	106	436	70	128	34	8	10	43	40	95	19
Verastegui, Jerry (C)	.213	41	122	11	26	4	0	0	10	10	19	0
Williams, Larry (1B/OF)	.287	31	108	9	31	5	0	1	15	3	22	1
Young, Matt (OF/2B)	.280	65	243	29	68	7	3	1	18	37	36	14

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Acosta, Jorge	2-2	6.56	21	0	0	35.2	37	31	26	35	35	.276
Bullock, Tyler	2-2	4.73	33	0	1	45.2	39	26	24	30	33	.235
Cuevas, Jairo	6-12	3.55	25	25	0	132.0	113	74	52	71	116	.225
Evans, Dustin	2-10	4.70	21	21	0	99.2	111	68	52	35	72	.285
Gunderson, Kevin	4-5	3.08	44	0	7	52.2	51	23	18	31	47	.256
Hanson, Thomas	3-3	4.20	11	11	0	60.0	53	33	28	32	64	.243
Heath, Deunte	2-4	5.82	11	11	0	55.2	64	45	36	31	47	.284
Hernandez, Moises	10-3	3.66	15	15	0	91.0	94	43	37	26	51	.265
Jung, Sung Ki	0-1	1.15	33	0	22	39.0	22	6	5	12	49	.164
Parr, James	3-4	3.18	8	8	0	39.2	36	14	14	6	37	.252
Payano, Nelson	4-4	3.56	39	1	0	60.2	45	28	24	51	83	.207
Sencion, Carlos	2-2	2.81	19	6	0	64.0	53	23	20	52	76	.225
Stanley, Adam	3-2	5.53	28	0	1	57.0	64	35	35	37	28	.288
Stevens, Jake	6-8	5.54	23	13	0	87.2	109	62	54	40	50	.312
Valenzuela, Sergio	0-0	6.88	18	2	0	35.1	47	33	27	18	19	.318
Venters, Jonathan	3-3	3.39	17	12	1	79.2	60	39	30	38	64	.210

ROME 66-74

SOUTH ATLANTIC LEAGUE
CLASS A

STATE MUTUAL STADIUM
(706) 368-9388

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Brezeale, Danny (3B)	.228	117	404	53	92	27	0	9	56	15	124	3
Britton, Phillip (C)	.287	89	345	54	99	22	3	10	44	9	44	4
Cabrera, Willie (OF)	.262	65	260	28	68	17	1	3	30	11	28	2
Flowers, Tyler (1B)	.298	106	389	65	116	34	2	12	70	49	74	3
Fontaine, Chase (INF)	.288	95	313	60	90	14	6	3	26	58	75	10
Hernandez, Victor (C)	.255	46	137	7	35	5	0	1	18	9	33	1
Hicks, Brandon (SS)	.313	37	128	26	40	11	0	4	15	27	26	5
Jones, Travis (2B)	.256	46	164	34	42	5	1	10	27	34	36	6
Lundahl, Chad (INF)	.215	88	311	31	67	13	0	3	33	17	63	0
Marcial, Robert (INF)	.232	74	220	28	51	8	1	1	20	16	52	4
Mejia, Ernesto (1B)	.307	36	137	17	42	9	2	4	24	4	30	2
Owings, Jon (OF)	.256	107	403	62	103	19	2	16	51	34	94	10
Rodriguez, Concepcion (OF)	.206	123	427	51	88	24	0	7	50	54	82	11
Schafer, Jordan (OF)	.372	30	129	16	48	15	2	5	20	16	31	4
Silva, Yohan (OF)	.236	104	339	62	80	10	4	10	43	59	72	11

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Acosta, Jorge	0-2	3.70	16	0	2	24.1	20	12	10	15	34	.222
Broadway, Michael	11-6	5.25	29	11	0	96.0	125	65	56	33	50	.314
Chapman, Jaye	3-1	6.27	20	0	0	37.1	31	26	26	19	42	.225
Cofield, Kyle	4-8	3.86	25	16	1	112.0	96	56	48	56	90	.236
Curtis, James	3-5	7.21	27	3	1	48.2	67	43	39	27	39	.337
Gustafson, Timothy	3-8	5.01	22	20	0	111.1	135	78	62	31	93	.305
Hanson, Thomas	2-6	2.59	15	14	0	73.0	51	28	21	26	90	.194
Heath, Deunte	2-3	2.03	16	9	0	71.0	59	19	16	19	47	.225
Lyman, Jeffrey	5-8	4.59	20	20	0	104.0	122	64	53	39	77	.295
Reynoso, Ryne	3-4	1.98	40	0	9	59.0	48	19	13	32	71	.221
Richmond, Jamie	7-6	3.05	25	24	0	138.2	141	71	47	25	98	.255
Rohrbough, Cole	2-0	1.29	6	6	0	28.0	13	7	4	12	38	.138
Sencion, Carlos	2-1	3.72	14	0	0	38.2	31	19	16	17	50	.215
Shaffer, Jared	2-0	2.28	9	2	1	23.2	25	8	6	14	15	.281
Valenzuela, Sergio	1-3	7.12	14	3	0	36.2	55	33	29	19	19	.350

DANVILLE 48-20

APPALACHIAN LEAGUE
ROOKIE ADVANCED

LEGION FIELD
(434) 797-3792

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Anderson, Chris (C)	.286	22	49	10	14	3	0	2	7	14	17	0
Carmona, Eliazar (OF)	.242	51	120	23	29	5	1	0	7	6	27	4
Coe, Adam (3B)	.257	58	218	25	56	16	0	3	24	17	51	4
Dominguez, Javier (C/OF)	.191	42	110	19	21	3	1	3	11	5	28	1
Fisher, Michael (SS/3B)	.325	33	126	22	41	11	1	2	27	15	27	0
Hicks, Brandon (SS)	.224	18	58	14	13	3	1	3	13	12	18	1
Johnson, Benjamin (C)	.282	32	103	13	29	2	0	1	12	9	22	3
Johnson, Cody (OF)	.305	63	243	51	74	18	5	17	57	26	72	7
Jones, Travis (2B)	.271	13	48	9	13	2	0	2	7	6	9	1
Lee, Carlos (OF)	.245	60	188	34	46	10	1	3	23	16	49	2
Lundahl, Chad (SS)	.295	32	112	13	33	6	0	0	12	10	13	0
Mejia, Ernesto (1B)	.339	29	109	17	37	8	2	5	24	6	24	6
Miles, Cole (2B)	.333	60	234	40	78	6	4	2	27	23	28	11
Morris, Joshua (1B)	.282	55	202	31	57	18	1	4	35	10	51	2
Shults, Stephen (OF/3B)	.271	59	192	34	52	19	0	6	25	16	67	2
Stevens, Jeff (C)	.407	25	59	10	24	5	0	1	13	4	10	0

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Barrett, Eric	2-0	2.28	5	3	0	23.2	14	9	6	9	25	.173
Beck, Casey	1-2	7.71	13	0	1	16.1	15	15	14	19	22	.242
Evarts, Steve	4-0	1.95	8	7	0	37.0	29	11	8	4	34	.213
Feliz, Neftali	2-0	1.98	8	7	0	27.1	18	8	6	12	28	.191
Fellman, Nicholas	1-0	2.25	22	0	16	28.0	16	8	7	7	46	.157
Gearrin, Cory	1-1	4.44	18	0	0	26.1	21	14	13	16	37	.214
Gonzalez, Raul	3-1	3.80	10	0	0	21.1	25	9	9	6	16	.291
Ladd, Tim	1-2	4.88	14	1	1	31.1	37	23	17	15	25	.289
Locke, Jeffrey	7-1	2.66	13	11	1	61.0	48	23	18	8	74	.213
Mehlich, Michael	0-0	1.80	9	0	2	15.0	13	4	3	14	16	.228
Ortegano, Jose	6-1	1.48	13	9	0	60.2	44	14	10	11	55	.199
Osuna, Edgar	5-3	2.47	13	6	2	54.2	55	19	15	11	66	.258
Palica, Thomas	4-2	4.91	12	2	1	36.2	43	23	20	11	31	.291
Ramirez, Wiliam	0-2	4.28	12	2	2	33.2	44	23	16	15	33	.310
Rodgers, Chad	3-1	3.88	11	10	1	48.2	40	21	21	11	46	.220
Rohrbough, Cole	3-2	1.08	8	7	0	33.1	20	8	4	8	58	.167

GULF COAST 17-43

GULF COAST LEAGUE
ROOKIE

THE BALLPARK AT DISNEY
(407) 939-2301

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Berres, David (OF)	.169	45	118	14	20	0	0	0	3	11	36	6
Dixon, Dennis (OF)	.188	24	64	7	12	1	1	0	6	14	18	5
Freeman, Frederick (1B)	.268	59	224	24	60	7	0	6	30	7	33	1
Fuller, Chais (INF)	.175	36	97	11	17	5	0	0	4	7	24	1
Gilmore, Jon (3B)	.284	43	162	11	46	5	1	1	29	4	28	0
Hamaoka, Takumi (OF)	.212	41	85	11	18	3	0	0	6	3	20	1
Henry, Rashod (OF)	.279	21	61	6	17	1	0	0	2	0	13	7
Heyward, Jason (OF)	.296	8	27	1	8	4	0	1	5	2	4	1
Kennelly, Mathew (C)	.215	39	107	10	23	4	0	2	10	5	19	0
Maddox, Chadwick (OF)	.186	35	102	4	19	3	0	0	5	8	21	1
Miles, Kuyaunnis (OF)	.128	43	109	4	14	2	1	0	3	3	57	8
Parra, Camilo (OF)	.217	41	92	16	20	1	0	3	7	5	31	2
Shimabukuro, Ryohei (1B)	.198	34	81	10	16	3	0	3	8	0	14	0
Sime, Samuel (SS/3B)	.295	56	217	35	64	15	0	5	33	7	28	10
Spiers, Joseph (2B)	.225	39	102	18	23	1	0	0	4	18	21	9
Sucre, Jesus (C)	.221	40	104	8	23	5	0	0	14	7	10	1

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Barrett, Eric	1-2	1.36	8	5	0	33.0	33	14	5	11	46	.262
Brewer, Caleb	0-1	4.68	11	4	0	32.2	31	22	17	24	23	.248
Castro, Yeliar	1-1	2.79	8	6	0	29.0	28	14	9	10	20	.246
Davis, Kevin	1-1	2.25	14	0	0	24.0	22	8	6	16	23	.244
Figueroa, Steven	2-5	5.63	12	9	0	48.0	47	32	30	13	44	.257
Garcia, Ysidro	0-4	8.16	11	0	0	14.1	24	20	13	14	5	.333
Kent, Steve	3-2	3.86	13	10	0	56.0	52	31	24	12	44	.241
Lagua, Eligio	0-3	5.28	14	2	0	29.0	36	21	17	17	22	.308
McMillan, Clayton	1-1	4.50	10	0	2	14.0	19	10	7	4	13	.322
Murillo, Eliezer	1-2	7.18	15	0	1	26.1	21	23	21	15	14	.221
Paulino, Angelo	2-4	4.71	12	8	0	42.0	39	26	22	22	46	.241
Railsback, Cody	1-3	3.95	7	1	0	13.2	14	9	6	5	14	.264
Rodriguez, Santos	0-1	6.67	12	2	2	28.1	29	25	21	21	35	.248
Rojas, Junior	3-3	4.26	7	6	0	31.2	33	15	15	10	28	.270
Shaffer, Jared	0-1	3.20	8	0	2	19.2	22	8	7	10	15	.289
Small, Matthew	0-3	4.91	10	0	1	14.2	15	12	8	6	18	.250

INDIVIDUAL STATS

Through September 13

BATTERS	AVG	SLG	OBP	G	AB	R	H	TB	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	CS	E
Diaz	.338	.514	.368	122	317	40	107	163	20	0	12	42	14	55	3	0	2
Jones, C.	.330	.598	.416	118	455	93	150	272	39	4	25	87	70	70	5	1	8
RIGHT	.288	.489	.348		184		53	90	12	2	7	28	17	28			
LEFT	.358	.672	.457		271		97	182	27	2	18	59	53	42			
Renteria	.330	.475	.387	111	442	78	146	210	29	1	11	53	40	69	11	1	10
Teixeira*	.327	.608	.406	39	153	29	50	93	5	1	12	39	19	36	0	0	3
RIGHT	.333	.509	.406		57		19	29	1	0	3	13	7	12			
LEFT	.323	.667	.405		96		31	64	4	1	9	26	12	24			
Escobar	.318	.436	.375	81	280	47	89	122	18	0	5	27	23	38	4	3	10
Francoeur	.298	.446	.342	146	581	77	173	259	35	0	17	95	38	114	3	2	3
Harris	.284	.410	.364	108	324	55	92	133	19	8	2	31	39	66	17	11	4
Johnson	.284	.470	.382	136	483	84	137	227	25	10	15	67	75	107	9	5	11
Prado	.280	.340	.308	22	50	4	14	17	3	0	0	1	2	5	0	0	2
McCann	.276	.476	.325	126	460	50	127	219	38	0	18	88	31	69	0	1	12
Franco*	.237	.316	.302	13	38	1	9	12	3	0	0	7	4	10	0	0	0
Miller	.235	.294	.278	9	17	2	4	5	1	0	0	2	0	4	0	0	0
Pena	.231	.346	.231	13	26	2	6	9	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	0
RIGHT	.235	.412	.235		17		4	7	0	0	1	2	0	1			
LEFT	.222	.222	.222		9		2	2	0	0	0	0	0	1			
Jones, A.	.220	.414	.315	141	522	75	115	216	25	2	24	86	67	129	5	1	2
Thorman	.219	.392	.260	112	278	35	61	109	18	0	10	35	13	66	1	1	6
Woodward	.191	.267	.246	87	131	15	25	35	5	1	1	8	10	28	1	0	6
Orr	.183	.200	.210	50	60	10	11	12	1	0	0	2	2	13	0	0	1
Sammons	.000	.000	.000	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ATLANTA	.275	.436	.340	146	5,130	735	1,410	2,239	298	27	159	707	481	1,037	59	27	95
OPPONENTS	.263	.419	.330	146	5,019	674	1,321	2,103	250	38	152	634	484	974	90	28	88

Totals include pitchers' hitting. * Stats with Braves only.

PINCH HITTERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) Miller (1.000-1-0-0), Prado (.333-3-0-0), Escobar (.333-2-0-0), Diaz (.277-13-0-4), Harris (.250-3-0-0), Thorman (.225-9-1-4), Orr (.222-6-0-2), Pena (.167-1-0-1), Woodward (.132-5-1-4), Johnson (.100-1-0-0), Franco (.000-0-0-0), Jones, C. (.000-0-0-0), McCann (.000-0-0-0), Renteria (.000-0-0-0). TEAM (.197-46-2-17).

PITCHERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) Hudson (.250-17-0-9), Villarreal (.250-1-0-0), Reyes (.231-3-0-0), Carlyle (.143-6-0-2), James (.128 -6-0-2), Smoltz (.082, 4-0-0-2), Moylan (.000-0-0-0), Cormier (.000-0-0-0), Lerew (.000-0-0-0), Yates (.000-0-0-0). STAFF (.151-36-0-16).

KEY: AVG-Batting average, SLG-Slugging percentage, OBP-One-base percentage, G-Games, AB-At-bats, R-Runs, H-Hits, 2B-Doubles, 3B-Triples, HR-Home runs, RBI-Runs batted in, BB-Walks, SO-Strikeouts, HP-Hit by pitch, SB-Stolen bases; CS-Caught stealing; E-Errors. W-L-Wins-Losses, ERA-Earned run average, OBA-Opponents' batting average, GS-Games started, CG-Complete games, GF-Games finished, SV-Saves, IP-Innings pitched, ER-Earned runs.

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	OBA	G	GS	CG	GF	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	BB	SO
Acosta	0-1	1.72	.176	13	0	0	4	0	15.2	9	3	3	1	9	16
Ascanio	0-1	4.38	.255	10	0	0	4	0	12.1	13	8	6	2	6	12
Carlyle	8-6	5.26	.285	20	19	0	1	0	101	111	64	59	19	30	68
Cormier	2-5	6.60	.299	9	8	0	1	0	43.2	53	33	32	14	18	27
Dotel*	0-0	8.31	.222	5	0	0	1	0	4.1	4	5	4	1	1	5
Gonzalez	2-0	1.59	.246	18	0	0	5	2	17	15	3	3	0	8	13
Hudson	15-8	3.48	.261	31	31	0	0	0	201.2	198	79	78	9	49	116
James	10-10	4.21	.269	27	27	0	0	0	147.2	153	70	69	28	56	102
Lerew	0-2	7.71	.298	3	3	0	0	0	11.2	14	10	10	4	7	9
Mahay*	1-0	2.21	.194	20	0	0	0	0	20.1	14	6	5	1	10	16
Moylan	5-3	1.88	.200	69	0	0	15	1	81.1	56	26	17	5	29	54
Reyes	0-2	7.75	.315	8	7	0	0	0	33.2	41	32	29	8	23	15
Ring*	0-0	0.00	.000	4	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	3
Smoltz	13-7	3.02	.254	29	29	0	0	0	187.2	183	69	63	14	43	177
Soriano	3-3	3.29	.192	63	0	0	22	6	63	44	25	23	11	12	57
Villarreal	2-2	4.44	.262	49	0	0	11	1	73	72	40	36	6	30	57
Yates	2-3	4.76	.246	70	0	0	14	2	62.1	59	39	33	5	28	65
ATLANTA	74-72	4.20	.263	146	146	0	146	33	1,311.1	1,321	674	612	152	484	974
OPPONENTS	72-74	4.65	.275	146	146	2	144	38	1,309	1,410	735	677	159	481	1,037

GAME BY GAME

GAME	DATE	OPP.	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRs	REC.	POS.	GB
1	4/2	PHI	A	W	5-3 (10)	Wickman (1-0)	McCann (1), Renteria 2 (2)	1-0	T-1	--
2	4/4	PHI	A	W	3-2 (11)	McBride (1-0)	McCann (2), Thorman (1)	2-0	2	- 1/2
3	4/5	PHI	A	W	8-4	James (1-0)	Johnson (1)	3-0	T-1	--
4	4/6	NYM	H	L	1-11	Redman (0-1)	Francoeur (1)	3-1	2	-1
5	4/7	NYM	H	W	5-3	Smoltz (1-0)	Diaz (1)	4-1	T-1	--
6	4/8	NYM	H	W	3-2	Soriano (1-0)	Johnson (2)	5-1	1	--
7	4/10	WAS	H	W	8-0	Hudson (1-0)	A. Jones (1), Francoeur (2)	6-1	1	+1
8	4/11	WAS	H	W	8-3	James (2-0)	A. Jones (2), C. Jones (1)	7-1	1	+2
9	4/12	WAS	H	L	0-2	Smoltz (1-1)	--	7-2	1	+1
10	4/13	FLA	H	L	4-11	Redman (0-2)	C. Jones (2), Pena (1)	7-3	T-1	--
11	4/15	FLA	H	W	8-4	Hudson (2-0)	C. Jones (3), A. Jones (3)	8-3	1	+1
12	4/16	WAS	A	L	1-5	James (2-1)	--	8-4	1	+1/2
13	4/17	WAS	A	W	6-4	Smoltz (2-1)	C. Jones (4)	9-4	1	+1/2
14	4/18	CHI	H	W	8-6	Villarreal (1-0)	Francoeur (3), Thorman (2)	1	+1/2	
15	4/19	CHI	H	L	0-3	Redman (0-3)	--	10-5	2	-1/2
16	4/20	NYM	A	W	7-3	Hudson (3-0)	C. Jones (5)	11-5	1	+1/2
17	4/21	NYM	A	L	2-7	James (2-2)	--	11-6	2	-1/2
18	4/22	NYM	A	W	9-6	Yates (1-0)	Johnson 2 (4), Renteria (3)	12-6	1	+1/2
19	4/23	FLA	A	L	7-8	Davies (0-1)	Francoeur (4), C. Jones (6)	12-7	2	-1/2
20	4/24	FLA	A	W	11-6	Moylan (1-0)	--	13-7	2	-1/2
21	4/25	FLA	A	L	3-4	Wickman (1-1)	Johnson (5), C. Jones (7), Diaz (2)	13-8	2	-1/2
22	4/27	COL	A	W	9-7	James (3-2)	A. Jones (4), Wilson (1)	14-8	1	+1/2
23	4/28	COL	A	W	6-2	Smoltz (3-1)	Francoeur (5), Renteria (4)	15-8	1	+1/2
24	4/29	COL	A	L	7-9 (11)	Colyer (0-1)	Thorman (3)	15-9	2	-1/2
25	4/30	PHI	H	W	5-2	Gonzalez (1-0)	C. Jones (8), A. Jones (5)	16-9	1	+1/2
26	5/1	PHI	H	L	4-6	Redman (0-4)	C. Jones 2 (10)	16-10	1	+1/2
27	5/2	PHI	H	W	4-3	Paronto (1-0)	--	17-10	1	+1/2
28	5/4	LAD	H	W	4-0	Smoltz (4-1)	--	18-10	T-1	--
29	5/5	LAD	H	L	3-6	Hudson (3-1)	--	18-11	2	-1
30	5/6	LAD	H	W	6-4	Paronto (2-0)	--	19-11	T-1	--
31	5/7	SD	H	L	2-4	James (3-3)	--	19-12	T-1	--
32	5/8	SD	H	W	3-2	Gonzalez (2-0)	--	20-12	T-1	--
33	5/9	SD	H	W	3-2	Smoltz (5-1)	--	21-12	T-1	--
34	5/10	SD	H	W	5-3	Hudson (4-1)	--	22-12	1	+1/2
35	5/11	PIT	A	W	4-1	Davies (1-1)	A. Jones (6), Francoeur (6)	23-12	1	+1/2
36	5/12	PIT	A	W	9-2	James (4-3)	Thorman 2 (5)	24-12	1	+1 1/2
37	5/13	PIT	A	L	2-13	Lerew (0-1)	--	24-13	1	+1/2
38	5/14	WAS	A	L	1-2	Smoltz (5-2)	McCann (3)	24-14	2	-1/2
39	5/15	WAS	A	W	6-2	Hudson (5-1)	Renteria 2 (6)	25-14	1	+1/2
40	5/16	WAS	A	L	4-6	Davies (1-2)	--	25-15	2	-1/2
41	5/17	WAS	A	L	3-4	Paronto (2-1)	C. Jones (11)	25-16	2	-1 1/2
42	(1 of 2) 5/19	BOS	A	L	3-13	Lerew (0-2)	Francoeur (7)	25-17	2	-2 1/2
43	(2 of 2) 5/19	BOS	A	W	14-0	Smoltz (6-2)	C. Jones (12), Johnson (6), Diaz (3)	26-17	2	-2 1/2
44	5/20	BOS	A	L	3-6	Hudson (5-2)	--	26-18	2	-2 1/2
45	5/22	NYM	H	W	8-1	Davies (2-2)	Thorman (6), Davies (1)	27-18	2	-1 1/2
46	5/23	NYM	H	L	0-3	James (4-4)	--	27-19	2	-2 1/2
47	5/24	NYM	H	W	2-1	Smoltz (7-2)	Diaz (4)	28-19	2	-1 1/2
48	5/25	PHI	H	L	3-8	Hudson (5-3)	--	28-20	2	-2 1/2
49	5/26	PHI	H	L	4-6	Carlyle (0-1)	Renteria (7)	28-21	2	-3 1/2
50	5/27	PHI	H	L	6-13	Davies (2-3)	Saltalamacchia (1), A. Jones (7)	28-22	2	-4 1/2
51	5/28	MIL	A	W	2-1	James (5-4)	A. Jones (8)	29-22	2	-4
52	5/29	MIL	A	L	4-5	Moylan (1-1)	Harris (1)	29-23	2	-5
53	5/30	MIL	A	W	9-3	Hudson (6-3)	Johnson (7)	30-23	2	-4
54	6/1	CHI	A	W	8-5	Davies (3-3)	--	31-23	2	-3 1/2
55	6/2	CHI	A	W	5-3	Yates (2-0)	A. Jones (9)	32-23	2	-3 1/2
56	6/3	CHI	A	L	1-10	Cormier (0-1)	--	32-24	2	-3 1/2
57	6/4	FLA	H	L	4-6	Hudson (6-4)	Escobar (1), Renteria (8)	32-25	2	-4
58	(1 of 2) 6/5	FLA	H	W	3-1	Carlyle (1-1)	Saltalamacchia (2), Woodward (1)	33-25	2	-3 1/2
59	(2 of 2) 6/5	FLA	H	L	1-5	Smoltz (7-3)	--	33-26	2	-3 1/2
60	6/6	FLA	H	L	4-7	Davies (3-4)	--	33-27	2	-3 1/2
61	6/7	CHI	H	L	1-2	James (5-5)	A. Jones (10)	33-28	2	-3 1/2
62	6/8	CHI	H	L	1-9	Cormier (0-2)	--	33-29	2	-4 1/2
63	6/9	CHI	H	W	9-5	Moylan (2-1)	A. Jones (11), Renteria (9)	34-29	2	-3 1/2
64	6/10	CHI	H	W	5-4	Paronto (3-1)	Johnson (8)	35-29	2	-2 1/2
65	6/12	MIN	A	L	3-7	Davies (3-5)	Francoeur (8), Thorman (7)	35-30	2	-2
66	6/13	MIN	A	L	0-6	James (5-6)	--	35-31	2	-2

GAME	DATE	OPP.	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRs	REC.	POS.	GB
67	6/14	MIN	A	L	2-3	Wickman (1-2)	McCann (4)	35-32	3	-2 1/2
68	6/15	CLE	A	W	5-4	Soriano (2-0)	--	36-32	2	-2 1/2
69	6/16	CLE	A	W	6-2	Smoltz (8-3)	Renteria (10)	37-32	2	-1 1/2
70	6/17	CLE	A	L	2-5	Davies (3-6)	Thorman (8)	37-33	2	1 1/2
71	6/18	BOS	H	W	9-4	James (6-6)	McCann (5), Thorman (9)	38-33	2	-1 1/2
72	6/19	BOS	H	L	0-4	Hudson (6-5)	--	38-34	2	-1 1/2
73	6/20	BOS	H	L	0-11	Carlyle (1-2)	--	38-35	2	-1 1/2
74	6/22	DET	H	L	0-5	Smoltz (8-4)	--	38-36	3	-2 1/2
75	6/23	DET	H	L	1-2	Davies (3-7)	C. Jones (13)	38-37	3	-3 1/2
76	6/24	DET	H	L	0-5	James (6-7)	--	38-38	3	-4 1/2
77	6/25	WAS	H	W	4-1	Hudson (7-5)	McCann (6)	39-38	3	-4 1/2
78	6/26	WAS	H	W	6-2	Carlyle (2-2)	Saltalamacchia 2 (4), A. Jones (12)	40-38	3	-3 1/2
79	6/27	WAS	H	W	13-0	Smoltz (9-4)	McCann (7)	41-38	3	-3 1/2
80	6/29	FLA	A	W	12-3	James (7-7)	--	42-38	2	-4
81	6/30	FLA	A	W	6-5	Hudson (8-5)	--	43-38	2	-4
82	7/1	FLA	A	L	5-6 (10)	Soriano (2-1)	A. Jones (13)	43-39	2	4
83	7/2	LAD	A	L	2-8	Smoltz (9-5)	--	43-40	2	-4
84	7/3	LAD	A	L	6-7	Ledezma (3-2)	McCann (8)	43-41	2	-4
85	7/4	LAD	A	W	5-2	James (8-7)	A. Jones (14)	44-41	2	-3
86	7/5	LAD	A	W	8-6	Moylan (3-1)	Francoeur (9), C. Jones 2 (15)	45-41	2	-3
87	7/6	SD	A	W	7-4	Carlyle (3-2)	A. Jones (15)	46-41	2	-2
88	7/7	SD	A	L	5-8	Yates (2-1)	Francoeur (10)	46-42	2	-3
89	7/8	SD	A	W	5-4	Davies (4-7)	McCann (9), Johnson (9)	47-42	2	-2
90	7/13	PIT	H	W	9-1	Hudson (9-5)	McCann 2 (11), A. Jones (16)	48-42	2	-1 1/2
91	7/14	PIT	H	W	5-4	Wickman (2-2)	A. Jones (17)	49-42	2	-1 1/2
92	7/15	PIT	H	W	5-1	Carlyle (4-2)	--	50-42	2	-1 1/2
93	7/16	CIN	H	L	3-10	Davies (4-8)	--	50-43	2	-1 1/2
94	7/17	CIN	H	L	5-6	Reyes (0-1)	A. Jones (18)	50-44	2	-2 1/2
95	7/18	CIN	H	L	4-5 (15)	Ascanio (0-1)	--	50-45	2	-2 1/2
96	7/19	STL	H	W	10-1	Hudson (10-5)	A. Jones (19), Diaz (5)	51-45	2	-2 1/2
97	7/20	STL	H	L	2-4	Soriano (2-2)	--	51-46	2	-3 1/2
98	7/21	STL	H	W	14-6	Carlyle (5-2)	C. Jones (16)	52-46	2	-2 1/2
99	7/22	STL	H	L	2-7 (10)	Yates (2-2)	Johnson (10)	52-47	2	-3 1/2
100	7/23	SF	A	W	4-2	Smoltz (10-5)	--	53-47	2	-3
101	7/24	SF	A	W	7-5 (13)	Moylan (4-1)	C. Jones (17)	54-47	2	-3
102	7/25	SF	A	L	1-2	James (8-8)	--	54-48	2	-4
103	7/26	SF	A	L	2-4	Carlyle (5-3)	Francoeur (11)	54-49	2	-4
104	7/27	ARI	A	L	7-8 (11)	Ledezma (3-3)	--	54-50	3	-4
105	7/28	ARI	A	L	3-4 (10)	Yates (2-3)	--	54-51	3	-4 1/2
106	7/29	ARI	A	W	14-0	Hudson (11-5)	A. Jones (20), Thorman (10)	55-51	3	-4 1/2
107	7/31	HOU	H	W	12-4	James (9-8)	McCann (12), Johnson 2 (12), Francoeur (12)	56-51	3	-3 1/2
108	8/1	HOU	H	W	12-3	Carlyle (6-3)	Renteria (11), Teixeira (1)	57-51	2	-3 1/2
109	8/2	HOU	H	L	11-12 (14)	Villarreal (1-1)	A. Jones (21), Teixeira (2), Diaz (6)	57-52	3	-4 1/2
110	8/3	COL	H	L	2-9	Smoltz (10-6)	Teixeira (3)	57-53	3	5 1/2
111	8/4	COL	H	W	6-4	Hudson (12-5)	Diaz (7)	58-53	2	-4 1/2
112	8/5	COL	H	W	6-5 (10)	Villarreal (2-1)	C. Jones (18)	59-53	2	-4 1/2
113	8/7	NYM	A	W	7-3	Carlyle (7-3)	Diaz (8), Francoeur (13)	60-53	2	-3 1/2
114	8/8	NYM	A	L	3-4	Soriano (2-3)	--	60-54	3	-4 1/2
115	8/9	NYM	A	W	7-6	Hudson (13-5)	C. Jones (19), Teixeira (4)	61-54	2	-3 1/2
116	8/10	PHI	A	L	4-5	Moylan (4-2)	Diaz (9)	61-55	3	-3 1/2
117	8/11	PHI	A	W	7-5	Mahay (1-0)	Johnson (13), Francoeur (14)	62-55	2	-2 1/2

GAME BY GAME

GAME	DATE	OPP.	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRs	REC.	POS.	GB
118	8/12	PHI	A	L	3-5	Carlyle (7-4)	--	62-56	3	-3 1/2
119	8/14	SF	H	W	5-4	Wickman (3-2)	Teixeira (5)	63-56	3	-3 1/2
120	8/15	SF	H	W	6-3	Hudson (14-5)	--	64-56	2	-3 1/2
121	8/16	SF	H	L	3-9	James (9-9)	--	64-57	3	-3 1/2
122	8/17	ARI	H	L	0-4	Cormier (0-3)	--	64-58	3	-4 1/2
123	8/18	ARI	H	L	6-12	Carlyle (7-5)	C. Jones (20), Francoeur 2 (16), A. Jones (22)	64-59	3	-5 1/2
124	8/19	ARI	H	W	6-2	Smoltz (11-6)	Teixeira 2 (7), Escobar (2)	65-59	3	-5 1/2
125	8/20	CIN	A	W	14-4	Hudson (15-5)	McCann (13), Teixeira 2 (9), A. Jones (23)	66-59	T-2	-5
126	8/21	CIN	A	L	7-8	Moylan (4-3)	McCann (14)	66-60	3	-6
127	8/22	CIN	A	L	2-4	Cormier (0-4)	McCann (15), A. Jones (24)	66-61	3	-6
128	8/23	CIN	A	L	7-9 (12)	Wickman (3-3)	Teixeira (10), C. Jones (21)	66-62	3	-6
129	8/24	STL	A	W	7-2	Smoltz (12-6)	--	67-62	3	-6
130	8/25	STL	A	L	4-5	Hudson (15-6)	Johnson (14)	67-63	3	-7
131	8/26	STL	A	L	1-4	Reyes (0-2)	--	67-64	3	-7
132	8/27	FLA	A	W	13-2	Cormier (1-4)	Diaz (10), McCann (16), Johnson (15)	68-64	3	-6
133	8/28	FLA	A	L	3-4 (11)	Villarreal (2-2)	McCann (17), C. Jones (22)	68-65	3	-6
134	8/29	FLA	A	W	7-4	Carlyle (8-5)	Diaz 2 (12), Escobar (3)	69-65	3	-5
135	8/ 31	NYM	H	L	1-7	Hudson (15-7)	--	69-66	3	-5 1/2
136	9/1	NYM	H	L	1-5	James (9-10)	--	69-67	3	-6 1/2
137	9/2	NYM	H	L	2-3	Smoltz (12-7)	--	69-68	3	-7 1/2
138	9/3	PHI	H	W	5-1	Cormier (2-4)	--	70-68	3	-7 1/2
139	9/4	PHI	H	L	2-5	Carlyle (8-6)	C. Jones (23)	70-69	3	-8 1/2
140	9/5	PHI	H	W	9-8	Soriano (3-3)	Harris (2)	71-69	3	-7 1/2
141	9/7	WAS	H	W	7-1	Smoltz (13-7)	C. Jones (24)	72-69	3	-7 1/2
142	9/8	WAS	H	W	9-2	James (10-10)	Francoeur (17), Escobar (4)	73-69	3	-7 1/2
143	9/9	WAS	H	L	4-7	Cormier (2-5)	C. Jones (25), Teixeira (11)	73-70	3	-8 1/2
144	9/10	NYM	A	L	2-3	Hudson (15-8)	McCann (18)	73-71	3	-9 1/2
145	9/11	NYM	A	W	13-5	Moylan (5-3)	Escobar (5), Teixeira (12)	74-71	3	-8 1/2
146	9/12	NYM	A	L	3-4	Acosta (0-1)	--	74-72	3	-9 1/2

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3 07 DIVISION SERIES	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11 07 LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 07 WORLD SERIES GAME 1	25 07 WORLD SERIES GAME 2	26	27 07 WORLD SERIES GAME 3
28 07 WORLD SERIES GAME 4	29 07 WORLD SERIES GAME 5*	30	31 07 WORLD SERIES GAME 6	1 07 WORLD SERIES GAME 7*		

DIVISION SERIES — TBS & TNT
LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP — TBS
WORLD SERIES — A.L. HOME GAMES — FOX
WORLD SERIES — N.L. HOME GAMES — FOX
* If Needed

All games on The Bull (94.9) and WGST-AM (640)
All games also on MLB-TV (webcast) and XM Radio (satellite).

ESPN Cable Sports Network
FOX Fox Broadcasting System
FSN Fox Sports Net South
TBS Turner Broadcasting System
SS SportSouth

MUSEUM & TOUR INFO

The Ivan Allen Jr. Braves Museum features more than 500 Braves artifacts that trace the team's history from its beginnings in Boston (1871-1952) to Milwaukee (1953-65) to Atlanta (1966-present). It is located on the northwest side of Turner Field at aisle 134. The museum opens two and a half hours before each game and closes in the middle of the seventh inning. The museum is open year-round and is the starting point of one-hour guided tours of Turner Field. Tours leave on the hour.

Tour reservations are not necessary for individuals or groups of less than 20 people. Tickets can be purchased the day of the tour at the main ticket window. Free parking in the Green lot.

Admission to the museum during games is one token ($2) and $5 on non-game days. Tour tickets are $10 for adults, $5 for children and $7 for groups of 20 or more. Walk-up tickets can be purchased at the ticket window. Groups of 20 or more and school groups must make reservations two weeks in advance by calling (404) 614-2311.

HOURS OF OPERATION

APRIL - OCTOBER
Monday - Saturday ..... 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Sunday ..... 1 - 3 p.m.

OCTOBER - MARCH
Monday - Saturday ..... 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

DEC. 23-JAN. 3 ..... CLOSED

TOUR TICKETS

ADULTS $10
CHILDREN 13 and Under $5

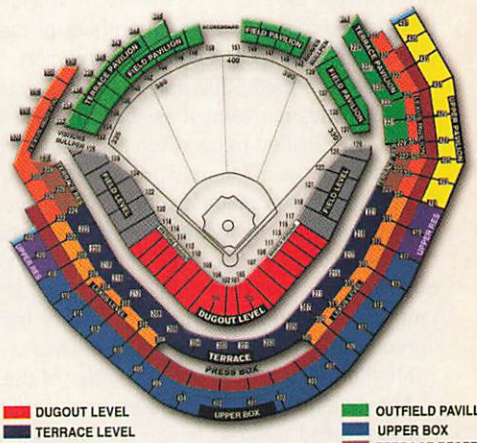
*Subject to change

Tours not available when the Braves have afternoon home games

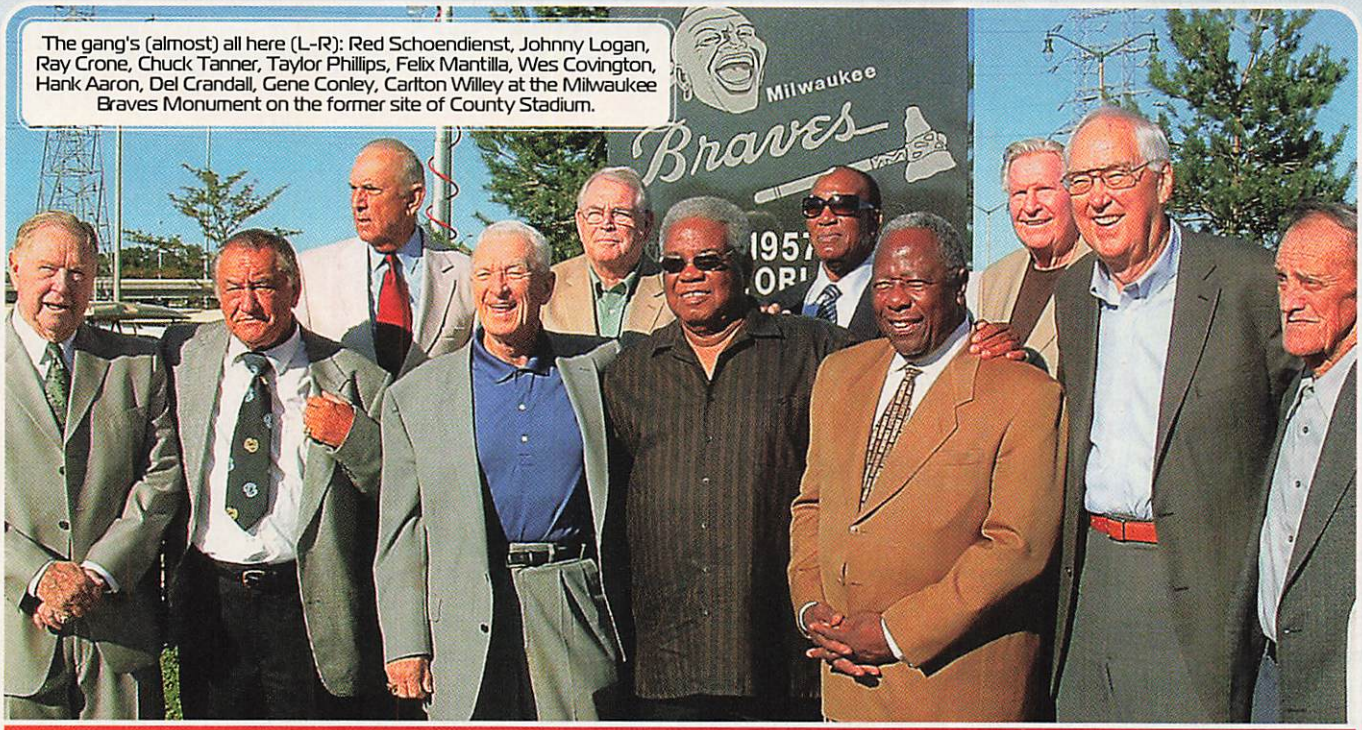
GIVE A GIFT CARD

Braves Gift Cards are available in $25 and $50 denominations and can be used to purchase Tickets, Concessions and Merchandise.

To purchase gift cards or to obtain more information, visit Braves.com or the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center (call 404-523-5854).



DUGOUT LEVEL
TERRACE LEVEL
FIELD LEVEL
LEXUS
OUTFIELD PAVILLION
UPPER BOX
TERRACE RESERVED
LEXUS PAVILLION
UPPER PAVILION



The gang's (almost) all here (L-R): Red Schoendienst, Johnny Logan, Ray Crone, Chuck Tanner, Taylor Phillips, Felix Mantilla, Wes Covington, Hank Aaron, Del Crandall, Gene Conley, Carlton Willey at the Milwaukee Braves Monument on the former site of County Stadium.

TOM ANDREWS

THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN!

HEROES OF '57 SERIES RETURN TO MILWAUKEE FOR A GRAND REUNION

BY GARY CARUSO

THERE'S NO SUCH THING as a sure bet at a casino. But that truism was thrown out the window the evening of Aug. 30 at the Potawatomi Bingo Casino in Milwaukee.

When a sellout gathering of 350 people assembled in the casino's Northern Lights Theater, it was a dead-lock cinch that all came to revel in the memory of the 1957 World Championship Braves and to salute those members of the team who were feted at the 50th anniversary reunion.

Those who paid $300 apiece (tickets were gone weeks in advance, almost as soon as they went on sale) were thrilled to be in the company of the 14 members of the '57 team who were able to return to the site of their biggest collective achievement. They listened to the former players recall not only their feats on the field, but also to poke fun at each other the way they did half a century ago, and even to laugh at the shenanigans and hijinks they pulled to lighten the pressure of the pennant race.

Most of all, it was a fond reminder of the love affair the people of Milwaukee had with the storybook team that knocked off the highly favored Yankees to win the Series in only the fifth of the 13 years the Braves called Milwaukee home.

"I couldn't believe a town was as crazy about a baseball team as this one was," said Felix Mantilla, the infielder from Puerto Rico who came to Milwaukee to play in 1956 and has never left.

"They gave us everything – a car, gas, milk, dry cleaning... I've been here since 1956, so you know I must like it."

The relationship between the players and fans is legendary, if short-lived. Above all else, that was the theme of the anniversary reunion, and that's why the players were happy to return.

"Being on a club like we had here in Milwaukee and being able to play for the fan base that we had was probably one of the greatest thrills I ever had," said Hank Aaron. "...I have not seen some of these players in quite a long time. Just to be around them means an awful lot to me."

The other players who were able to attend were leftfielder Wes Covington, righthander Gene Conley, catcher Del Crandall, righthander Ray Crone, outfielder Johnny DeMerit, shortstop Johnny Logan, outfielder Andy Pafko, lefthander Taylor Phillips, second baseman Red Schoendienst, outfielder Chuck Tanner, catcher/outfielder Bob "Hawk" Taylor and righthander Carlton Willey.

However, all 41 members of the team were remembered during the festivities with photos and script about their contributions that were read by emcee Bob Barry, a local radio personality.

Family members represented three key players who are deceased. Mary Lou and Lewis Burdette, daughter and son of '57

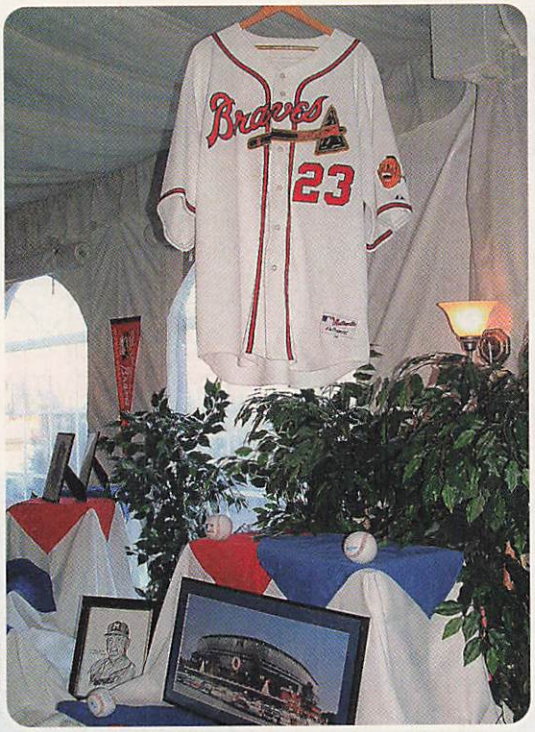
World Series MVP Lou Burdette were there, along with Greg Spahn, son of legendary lefty Warren Spahn, and Judy Mathews, the widow of Hall of Fame third baseman Eddie Mathews, who also was represented by his sons Dr. Ed Mathews and Johnny, and daughter Stephanie, who still live in the Milwaukee area.

Commissioner Bud Selig, who grew up as a Braves fan and runs his office out of Milwaukee, hoped to attend. However, he was delayed getting back to Milwaukee by a rescheduled groundbreaking for the new ballpark in Minneapolis.

Braves Hall of Famer Ernie Johnson, who was a key relief pitcher on the '57 team, planned to attend but had to cancel at the last minute due to health concerns.

The proceedings began earlier in the day with a press conference during which Aaron, Covington, Crandall and Schoendienst fielded questions at Miller Park. Afterwards, all the players were paraded in golf carts to the Milwaukee Braves monument that sits outside Miller Park on the ground where County Stadium stood. This was the lone opportunity for fans without banquet tickets to see all the players, and a few hundred – many wearing Milwaukee Braves caps and jerseys - showed up in spite of the fact that there was practically no publicity.

A cocktail reception, during which most of the players signed autographs for ticket holders, began the evening at the casino.



TOM ANDREWS

Both the reception venue (left) and the theater where the main event was held were decorated with colorful displays of Braves pennants, photos, drawings and other items that made it seem like the glory days of these players took place only yesterday.

Crandall, the captain of the '57 Braves and a member of the Braves Hall of Fame, and Covington traded good-natured verbal jabs throughout the events and dominated the microphone, as well. Not that anyone complained, because they brought a good deal of humor to the banquet and the press conference.

"There are a lot of 'young' people here tonight who don't even know who we are... but Johnny conned you out of $300 anyway!" cracked Crandall about the always effervescent Logan, who is an even better promoter than he was a shortstop. And that's saying something, because he was the Braves' starter for nine straight years (1952-60, the longest tenure of consecutive seasons in franchise history) and a four-time NL All-Star.

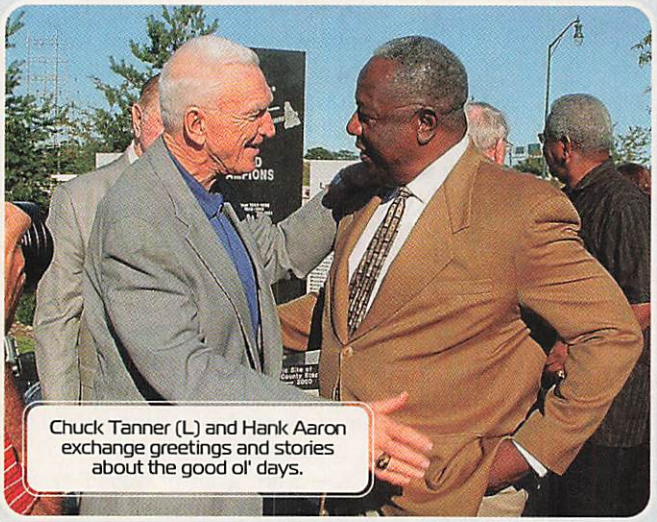
Naturally, the player who received the most rousing ovation was Aaron, who Covington declared "will carry the (home run) crown forever and ever – those who played the game know that."

The players continually complimented each other and proved the camaraderie that bonded them into a championship team 50 years ago still exists today.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

TOM ANDREWS

Former shortstop Johnny Logan, the driving force behind the reunion, makes a point (L), and Hank Aaron (R) tells the capacity crowd what a thrill it was to play in Milwaukee.



Chuck Tanner (L) and Hank Aaron exchange greetings and stories about the good ol' days.

TOM ANDREWS

"That's why I came," said Aaron. "Some of these guys I haven't seen for a long time, and I wanted to see them."

And Aaron's former teammates were thrilled to see him, too. Chuck Tanner, who was a rookie on the '57 Braves a short time before being traded, told the crowd about the Hank Aaron necktie Aaron once gave him.

Tanner, who managed the Braves in Atlanta (1986-88), said he's only worn the tie once because he's afraid someone will try to steal it. "But when I go down," he said with a laugh, "that tie's gonna be on me."

The best "clothing story" of the night went to Covington, though, who brought back images of the team leaders when it came to practical jokes – Spahn and Burdette.

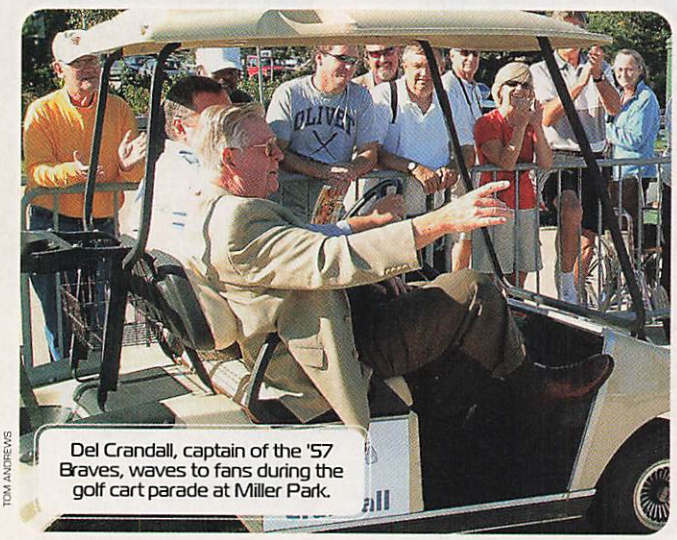
"I wore Stetson hats back then," said the power-hitting outfielder who made two sensational catches to help save Burdette in the Series. "I couldn't afford them, but I liked to wear them.

"Spahn and Burdette teased me about it, and I told them not to go near it. But they got it anyway and took it out to home plate and set it on fire before 40,000 fans. The ground crew came running out because they thought home plate was won fire! Spahn and Burdette got a shovel and carried it back to the clubhouse."

With the banquet crowd howling, Covington went on to tell how Mathews and righthander Bob Buhl cut his shoelaces and put "stink bombs" in his suit pockets, among the many other pranks that they used to pull on each other.

But Covington got his payback, too, including the day they were leaving Forbes Field in Pittsburgh via a bus to the airport.

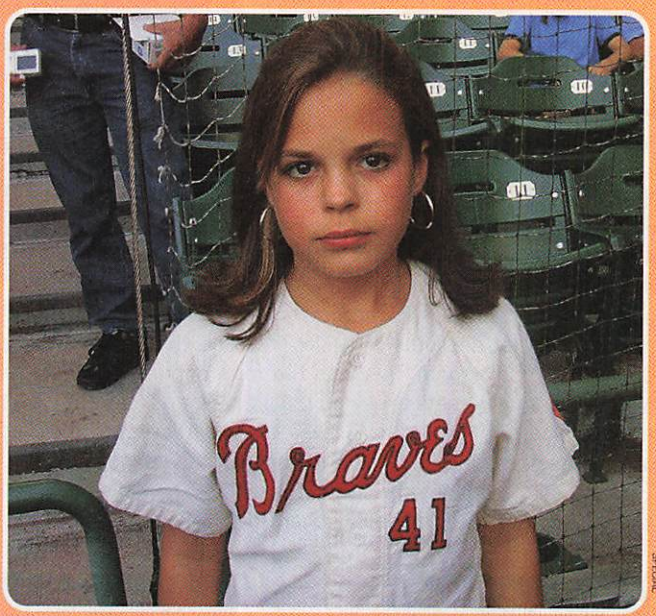
"Buhl was reading the New York Times, and I set his paper on fire," Covington cackled. "The bus driver got out the fire extinguisher, and players were running everywhere. We'd just lost, but we came back the next day and played our best. We had great men and great athletes. We respected each other, and we'd die for each other."



Del Crandall, captain of the '57 Braves, waves to fans during the golf cart parade at Miller Park.

TOM ANDREWS

WALK OF FAME



SPECIAL

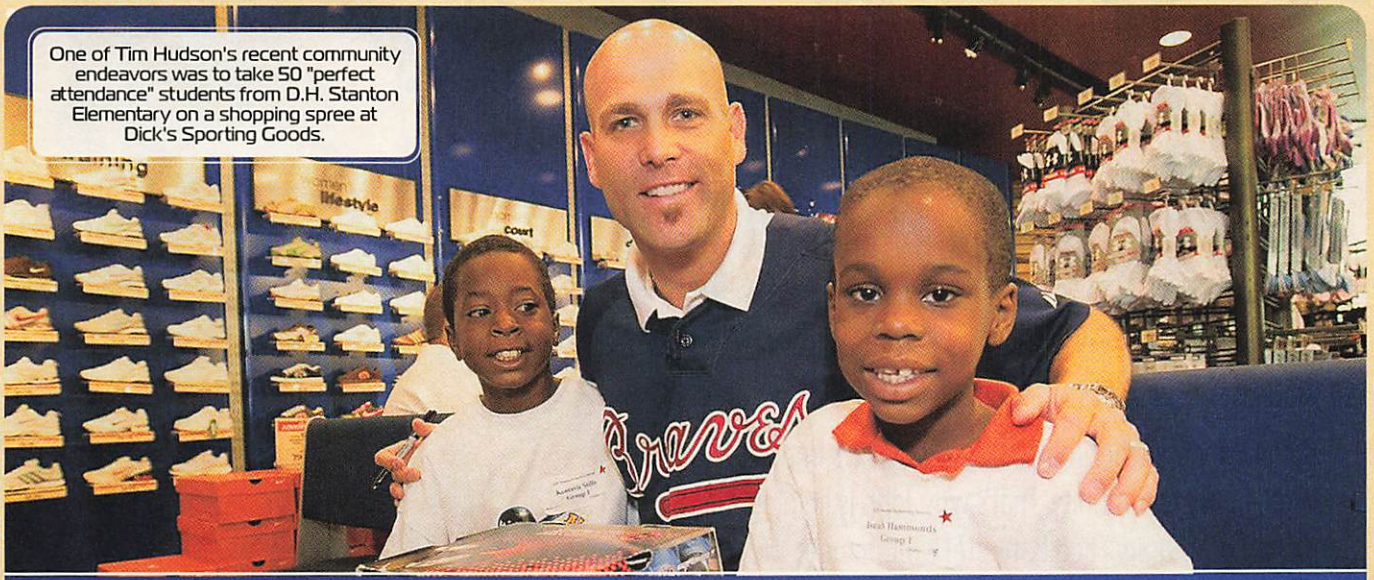
Allison Mathews, 11-year-old granddaughter of the late Eddie Mathews, wore her father's (Dr. Ed Mathews) old father/son game jersey to the Walk of Fame ceremony.

THE BRAVES PLAYED their last game in Milwaukee in 1965, but they have not been forgotten. As part of the festivities surrounding the 50th reunion of the 1957 World Championship team, Eddie Mathews, Warren Spahn and general manager John Quinn were inducted into the Miller Park Walk of Fame Aug. 31 prior to the Brewers game.

It's the first time any Braves were so honored by the Brewers. Previous inductees include Hank Aaron (as a Brewer), commissioner Bud Selig, Rollie Fingers, Paul Molitor, Robin Yount, Cecil Cooper, Bob Uecker (as a Brewers broadcaster), Harry Dalton, Jim Gantner, Gorman Thomas, Don Money and Harvey Kuenn.

Family members represented the three deceased 2007 inductees. Bob Quinn, a former major league general manager, accepted for his father, John, the Braves' GM from 1953-58. Greg Spahn accepted for his father, Warren, the winningest lefthander in history who pitched in Milwaukee from 1953-64. And Judy Mathews accepted for her late husband, Eddie, a Milwaukee Brave in each season the team played there (1953-65).

A video tribute to the three was played on the big screen, and Uecker served as emcee.



One of Tim Hudson's recent community endeavors was to take 50 "perfect attendance" students from D.H. Stanton Elementary on a shopping spree at Dick's Sporting Goods.

PITCHING IN

HUDSON'S CHARITABLE ENDEAVORS REWARDED WITH SECOND CLEMENTE NOMINATION

BY MARK BOWMAN OF MLB.COM

AS TIM HUDSON WAS WORKING his way toward the majors, he and his wife, Kim, envisioned becoming involved in many charitable endeavors. A little more than a month into his big league career, a young girl named Miranda, who was suffering from a brain tumor, provided them the realization that they wanted to make a difference with the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Sitting in an Oakland-area Applebee's that evening in 1999, the Hudsons heard Miranda talk about her dream of seeing Disney World and discuss the reality that would likely limit her instead to attending a Sacramento Kings game.

"It was kind of heartbreaking to hear that come out of her," Hudson said. "I wanted to buy her and her family a trip to Disney World. But at the time, I had all of a month in the big leagues. If I was in the same situation now, I wouldn't think twice about getting her and her family the trip."

In the ensuing eight years, Hudson has established himself as one of the game's finest pitchers and gained a bank account that allows him and Kim to fulfill their passion to help needy children. They remain connected with the Make-A-Wish Foundation, and since coming to Atlanta in 2005, have established a good relationship with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

"It makes you feel good to know you've touched somebody or made their day a little better," Hudson said. "You wouldn't be able to comprehend some of things some of these kids are having to deal with."

Recognizing his many charitable endeavors for the second straight year, the Braves have nominated Hudson for this year's Roberto Clemente Award.

The award recognizes the player who best exemplifies the game of baseball, sportsmanship, community involvement and the individual's contribution to his team. It is named in honor of the former Pirates outfielder who died in a plane crash while attempting to transport relief supplies to earthquake-stricken Nicaragua on Dec. 31, 1972. The winner, chosen from nominees from each of the 30 teams, will be announced during the World Series.

"It's an honor to be nominated for any kind of award like that," said Hudson, who was also nominated for this award with the A's four times from 2001-04. "It's a combination of me and my wife. She's every bit as involved in everything as I am. She and I together have been pretty committed to a couple of different charities since I've been in the big leagues. It's something we've been passionate about for a while."

On Aug. 13, Hudson, John Smoltz, who won the 2005 Roberto Clemente Award, and Jeff Francoeur held a golf tournament to help raise funds for Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Each of them makes frequent visits to hospitals to see sick children, some of whom are battling terminal illnesses.

"For that short time that you were in contact with that child and their family, it's good to know that you've touched them a little bit and made their days a little happier," said Hudson, whose charitable endeavors aren't limited solely to children.

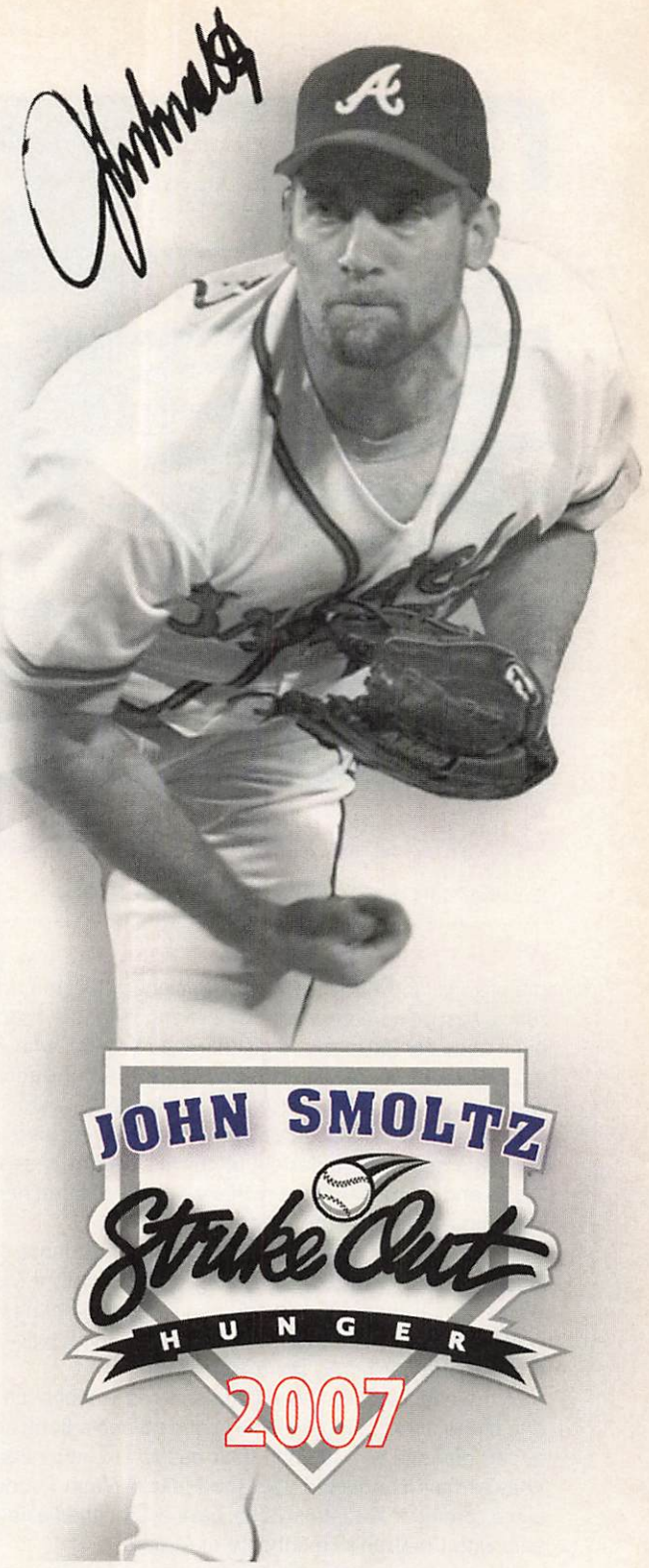
The Hudsons have delivered turkeys to needy families around Thanksgiving, and have also served food to the homeless at Turner Field on Thanksgiving and Christmas over the course of the past two years.

"Every day I think how lucky I am to play baseball for a living and to see three healthy kids (at home) who are awesome," Hudson said.

As the Braves recipient of the Roberto Clemente Award, Hudson will receive a $7,500 grant from Chevrolet that he will donate to the Anna's Angel Fund, a non-profit organization established by a young Atlanta-area cancer patient that offers financial assistance to youth battling pediatric cancer.

Fans can participate in the selection process of the national winner of the Clemente Award by voting at mlb.com/chevy21 through Oct. 5.

Strike Out Hunger!



Atlanta Braves pitcher John Smoltz knows it's important to build a better community. That's why John is helping the Atlanta Community Food Bank strike out hunger. We need your help too! You can help Georgians in need by joining John's Strike Out Hunger team. John is donating $100 to the Food Bank for every strikeout this season. And you can receive a sports item autographed by John for every pledge YOU make. As a special thank you for your donation and support, each paid pledge will receive a gift based on the pledge levels shown below. All gifts are tax deductible less the retail value of the item(s) received. All gifts will be autographed by John Smoltz.

Yes!

I will pledge $_____

Signed Gear		Total
Limited Edition Photograph	$ 25 ___	$___
Baseball Cap	$ 75 ___	$___
Baseball	$ 150 ___	$___
Official Bat	$ 400 ___	$___
Official Glove	$ 750 ___	$___
Official Smoltz Braves Jersey	$1250___	$___
All items are	$2500___	$___

Name:_____

___

Address:_____

City:_____ State:_____ Zip:_____

Phone:_____

The Strike Out Hunger season begins with the Braves opening home game and ends with the final regular season home game. All items based on availability and will be sent to you at the close of the Braves season and upon receipt of payment.

For more information call 404-892-FEED ext.1246. Or visit ACFB.org

Pledge forms should be mailed to Atlanta Community Food Bank, 732 Joseph E. Lowery Blvd. NW, Atlanta, GA 30318-6628

Please make checks payable to Atlanta Community Food Bank.

ATLANTA COMMUNITY FOOD BANK

Nourishing stronger communities.

Three-Time World Series Veteran **Brian Hunter** Now Hunts For New Talent

BACK IN THE FAMILY

BY BRIAN KNAPP

PITTSBURGH LEFTHANDER John Smiley stood 60 feet, six inches away as Brian Hunter approached the plate for his first at-bat in Game 7 of the 1991 National League Championship Series at Three Rivers Stadium. The 20-game winner tossed a first-pitch changeup outside the strike zone and fell behind in the count. With a runner at second and two outs, Hunter paused to compose himself and recalled reviewing a pre-game scouting report on Smiley.

"I remember seeing in the report that if he fell behind 1-0 with a changeup, he would follow it up with a fastball inside – every time," Hunter said. "I thought to myself, 'If he throws a fastball inside, I'm going to hit it as hard as I can.'"

Atlanta scouts were on point. Smiley aimed his next pitch, a fastball, at the inside third of the plate, and Hunter murdered it. The ball hooked into the left field seats just inside the foul pole - a two-run homer that gave the Braves a 3-0 lead and all but crushed Pittsburgh's hopes of reaching its first World Series since 1979. Two batters later, the Pirates removed Smiley. One of the league's premier southpaws had been undone by one swing of a rookie's bat.

"That's what you always dream about," Hunter said. "I hit a home run. I hit a first-inning home run in Game 7."

Some three hours later, as more than 40,000 heartbroken Pirates fans watched, Hunter fielded a ground ball at first base, made the unassisted putout, and ended Game 7 - the Braves 4-0 victors. It led to the first of his three World Series appearances with Atlanta (he also played in 1992 and 1999).

"A lot of great Hall-of-Fame players never made it to the World Series," Hunter said. "I made it there my first two years."

Hunter had long dreamed of reaching the sport's pinnacle. Raised in a single-parent home in Torrance, Calif., he watched his mother, Paulette Marlowe, work two jobs in order to keep a roof over the family.

"I'm still a momma's boy," Hunter said.

Hunter excelled in football and basketball but, over time, gravitated toward baseball.

His athletic exploits carried him to Cerritos College, a two-year school just outside of downtown Los Angeles where he developed into a pro prospect.

The Braves chose Hunter in the eighth round of the 1987 draft. Four years later, he made his debut for Atlanta after he was called up during the magical 1991 season. He hit a dozen homers and knocked in 50 runs in only 97 games, finishing fourth in voting for the National League Rookie of the Year.

"It was wild," Hunter said. "It didn't become a big deal until after the All-Star break. We won nine out of 10, and the Dodgers lost nine out of 10. Then, every game was like a playoff game."

Hunter remained with the Braves through the conclusion of the 1993 season, but the acquisition of Fred McGriff midway through that summer made him expendable. In November, Atlanta traded the first baseman to Pittsburgh for minor league pitcher Jose Delgado. Severing ties to the only organization he had ever known proved difficult for Hunter.

"I grew up in the organization," he said. "I knew everybody. At the time, I was [ticked] off. I always wondered what I could do if I got 500 at-bats. I thought I was going in the expansion draft, but [the Braves] protected me. I couldn't understand why they protected me. In the end, I was happy I got traded to Pittsburgh. I was like, 'Now let me see if I can play.'"

Hunter never got the 500 at-bats for which he lobbied. In fact, he never batted more than 256 times in a season. That was in 1994, which he split between Pittsburgh and Cincinnati to produce his best power season - 15 homers and 57 RBIs. He also was an excellent defensive first baseman and occasional leftfielder.

He played for six teams over nine years before injuries cut his career short, a broken forearm forcing his retirement in 2002 with a .234 career batting average and 67 home runs.

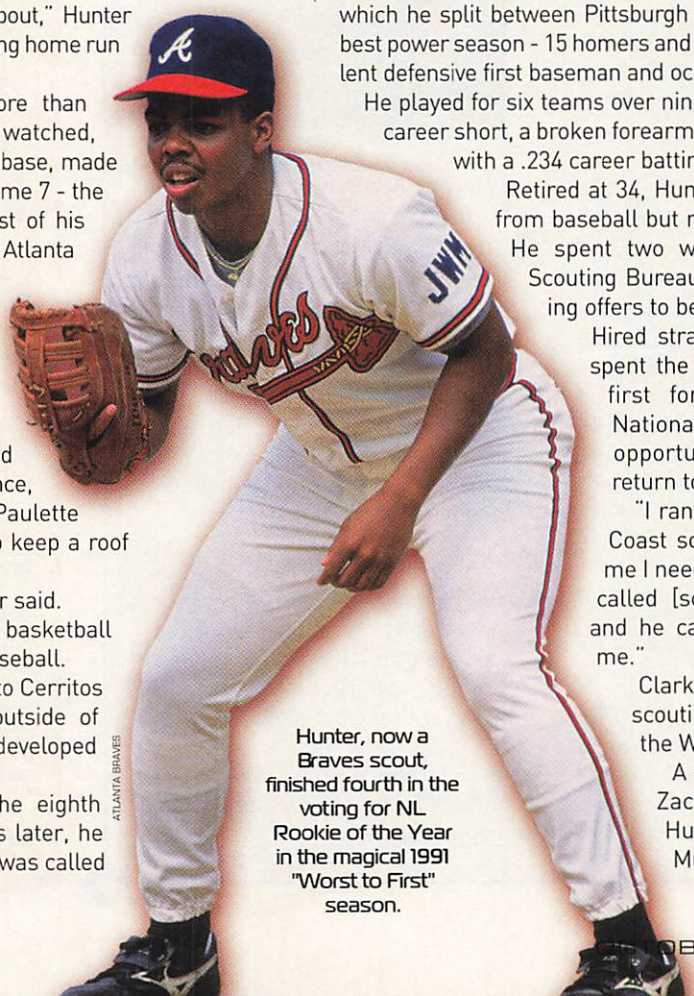
Retired at 34, Hunter spent the next year away from baseball but returned to the game in 2003. He spent two weeks at the Major League Scouting Bureau in Arizona, spurning coaching offers to become a scout.

Hired straight out of scout school, he spent the next four years on the road, first for the Mets, then for the Nationals. In November 2006, the opportunity arose for a potential return to the Braves.

"I ran into one of the Braves' West Coast scouts," Hunter said. "He told me I needed to get back in the family. I called [scouting director] Roy Clark, and he came up with a great job for me."

Clark made Hunter responsible for scouting all the junior colleges on the West Coast.

A divorced father of two sons - Zachary, 10, and Joshua, 4 - Hunter, now 39, resides in Murietta, Calif.

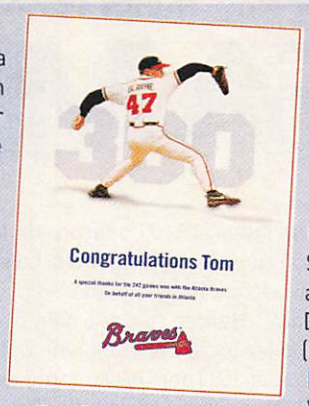


ATLANTA BRAVES

Hunter, now a Braves scout, finished fourth in the voting for NL Rookie of the Year in the magical 1991 "Worst to First" season.

ALUMNI NOTES

The Oklahoma Sports Museum plans to honor **Tom Glavine** (LHP, 1987-2002) as the newest lefthander in the 300-victory club when it holds its annual **Warren Spahn** Award Gala this off-season (date and location to be determined). Glavine, who won No. 300 on Aug. 5, is only the fifth lefthander ever to reach that level and the first since Steve Carlton (329) in 1983. Spahn (LHP, 1942, '46-64) leads all lefties with 363 wins. Eddie Plank (326) and Lefty Grove (300) are the other two in the elite group. Since 1999, the Oklahoma Sports Museum has presented the Warren Spahn Award to the majors' top lefthander, based on a formula combining wins, ERA and strikeouts. Minnesota's Johan Santana won last year. The Braves purchased a full-page ad in the New York Daily News to honor Glavine for his 300th win.



The Braves placed this full-page ad in the New York Daily News.

The Boston Braves Historical Association will hold its annual dinner/reunion Oct. 7 at the Holiday Inn in Brookline, Mass., from 1-5 p.m. A tour of the former site of Braves Field will commence at 11:30 a.m. Tickets for the banquet are $45 each. Former Braves tentatively scheduled to attend include **Gene Conley** (RHP, 1952, '54-58), **Al Dark** (SS, 1946, '48-49, '60), **Johnny Logan** (SS, 1951-61) and **Art Johnson** (LHP, 1940-42). Call (508) 485-1423.

Greg Maddux (RHP, 1993-2003) was voted to all-time nine-man Rawlings Gold Glove team.

Dale Murphy (C/1B/OF, 1976-90) was honored during the opening ceremonies and reception for the Provo (Utah) Senior Games on Aug. 25. Murphy also gave the keynote address at the American Legion World Series Banquet of Champions Aug. 23 in Bartlesville, Okla.

All fans attending the Milwaukee Brewers game Sept. 2 at Miller Park received a Milwaukee Braves Nesting Doll Set featuring **Hank Aaron** (OF/1B, 1954-74), **Eddie Mathews** (3B, 1952-66) and **Warren Spahn** (LHP, 1942, '46-64).

Colorado signed **Mark Redman** (LHP, 2007) to a minor league contract Aug. 19 and called him up to the majors Sept. 7.

Washington traded **Ray King** (LHP, 2003) to Milwaukee Sept. 3 for a player to be named.

Alabama governor Bob Riley chats with new Academy of Honor member Hank Aaron.

Hank Aaron (OF/1B, 1954-74) was sworn into the Alabama Academy of Honor Aug. 20 at the state capitol. The academy recognizes living Alabamians for accomplishments "reflecting great credit on the state." Alabama Gov. Bob Riley hugged Aaron and gave him a state lapel pin. Aaron signed autographs and posed for pictures.

The Giants' **Russ Ortiz** (RHP, 2003-04) had season-ending elbow surgery Aug. 29 for a torn flexor tendon. He also may need Tommy John surgery and isn't likely to pitch again until at least 2009.

B.J. Surhoff (OF/1B, 2000-02) was inducted into the Orioles Hall of Fame Aug. 25.

BIRTHDAYS

OCTOBER

1ST — STREMY HERMOSO (61), BUZZ CAPRA (60), PETE FALCONE (54), JEFF REARDON (52), ROBERTO KELLY (43), JOHN THOMSON (34)

2ND — MIKE DE LA HOZ (69), PAUL DOYLE (68), TREY MOORE (35)

3RD — BOB SKINNER (76), JIM BREAZEALE (58)

4TH — TED DAVIDSON (68), JIMY WILLIAMS (64), TONY LA RUSSA (63), DAVE SCHULER (54), CHARLIE LEIBRANDT (51), JOE BOEVER (47)

5TH — REY SANCHEZ (40)

6TH — GARY GENTRY (61), STEVE KLINE (60), CHARLIE VAUGHAN (60)

7TH — TIM UNROE (37)

8TH — JIMMY KREMERS (42), JOE AYRAULT (36)

9TH — JOE PEPITONE (67)

10TH — LARRY MAXIE (67), FRANCISCO CABRERA (41)

11TH — GREGG OLSON (41)

12TH — LUIS POLONIA (43)

13TH — FRANK LACORTE (56)

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30TH — BOBBY BRAGAN (90), GERALD PERRY (47), JOE JOHNSON (46)

31ST — PAUL ZUVELLA (49), FRED MCGRIFF (44)

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GARY CARUSO

EDITOR & PUBLISHER

OCTOGENARIAN

IT COULD HAVE been little more than a bunch of old ballplayers getting together to tell war stories and to sign autographs for some of their fans. But the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Milwaukee Braves' 1957 World Series Championship was so much more, thanks to a committed group of volunteers and the assistance of a handful of corporate sponsors.

Though the efforts of many deserve praise, the acclaim must begin and end with the front man, an absolute wonder of energy, imagination and dedication of 81 years who is a tireless champion of the magic that in the 1950s transformed Milwaukee into a land of baseball enchantment, the likes of which had never been seen before - nor has it been seen since. That octogenarian is Johnny Logan, who also happened to be the Braves' starting shortstop from 1952-60.

As wild as Atlanta was for the Braves in the early '90s, Milwaukee was even more enraptured by the Braves. The franchise announced it was leaving Boston for Wisconsin in spring training of 1953. With no advance sale and with a team the locals knew nothing about, the Braves attracted a National League record attendance in excess of 1.8 million. The next four seasons, they averaged 2.1 million in the smallest market in the majors.

The story goes far beyond attendance figures, as the 14 players who attended the Aug. 30 event in Milwaukee discussed repeatedly. The Braves owned Milwaukee, and even though their salaries could be measured by what today's players receive for one game, the good citizens made sure their heroes lived like kings. Free cars, free gas, free milk, free dry cleaning, and much more were part of the Milwaukee experience.

"Memories, so many memories," said Logan, trying to express why he put it all together... not just this 50-year reunion, but the formation of the Milwaukee Braves Historical Association (MBHA) in 1999 and the dedication of the distinctive Milwaukee Braves monument in 2002, and many other events and activities.

Without Logan's remarkable drive, none of it would have happened. And certainly the 50th anniversary wouldn't have been the same without him and possibly wouldn't have taken place at all.

When they put together that project that culminated in July with the announcement of the "new" 7 wonders of the world, they overlooked Logan. Machu Picchu has nothing on Logan. Anyone who has ever met him knows he's as colorful and entertaining - and, yes, zany - as they come. And at 81 (he says baseball record books erroneously list his birth year as 1927 instead of '26), the four-time NL All-Star looks and acts like he's barely lost a step - or a thought.

Congratulations to Logan and the entire MBHA for pulling off such a remarkable celebration for Hank Aaron, Red Schoendienst, Del Crandall and the other 11 players in attendance, as well as the fans who came from as far away as both coasts. And thanks to the Potawatomi Bingo Casino, the Milwaukee Brewers and the other sponsors who made the event a first-class affair.

Anyone interested in reliving the reunion and the highlights of the '57 season should visit milwaukeebraveshistoricalassociation.com to order the forthcoming DVD titled "Milwaukee Braves: The Golden Legacy" that's due for a Dec. 1 release. The price is $19.95, and the documentary will include footage from the '57 season, the 50-year reunion, and more.

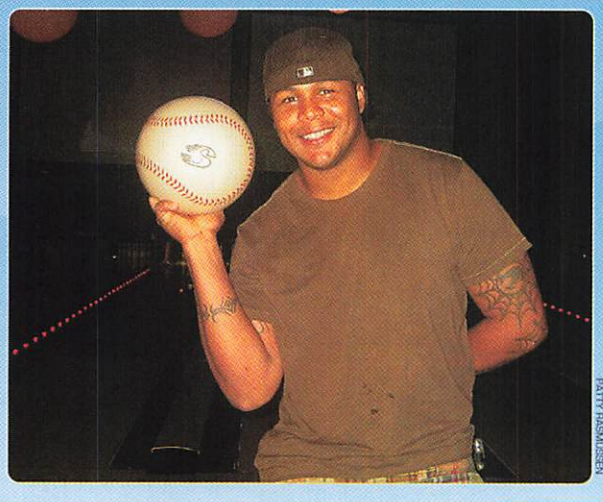
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE RICHMOND BRAVES, who swept a doubleheader from Durham on Sept. 15 to win the International League's Governor's Cup Championship as this issue was going to press. More on that accomplishment next month.

One of the highlights in the best-of-five series was the six innings of no-hit ball pitched by 26-year-old lefty Francisley Bueno in Game 3. Because he'd reached 100 pitches, Bueno was pulled with a 2-0 lead.

THIS ISSUE OF CHOPTALK was mailed Sept. 21. The November issue will be mailed Oct. 22.

BEYOND BASEBALL

BY **PATTY RASMUSSEN**



Andruw Jones shows off his customized baseball/bowling ball.

PATTY RASMUSSEN

PINHEADS

AN UPSCALE BOWLING PARTY auctioned off for over $4,000 at the Aug. 5 draw party for the **John Smoltz-Tim Hudson-Jeff Francoeur** Atlanta Braves Celebrity-Amateur Golf Tournament was held at Atlantic Station's Ten Pin Alley in Midtown Atlanta on Sept. 7 - right after the Braves' exciting 9-8, comeback win over the Phillies. The winner of the party, **Scott Robertson**, works for Turner Construction Company, and brought along 10 buddies to bowl with Hudson, **Andruw Jones**, **Chris Woodward**, **Pete Orr** and **Corky Miller**. Andruw took the event so seriously he even brought his personal custom painted bowling ball! According to **Kim Hudson**, the guys split into three groups and bowled three or four games. "At the end," said Kim, "just the players bowled head-to-head and, of course, Tim and Andruw battled it out. Tim won."

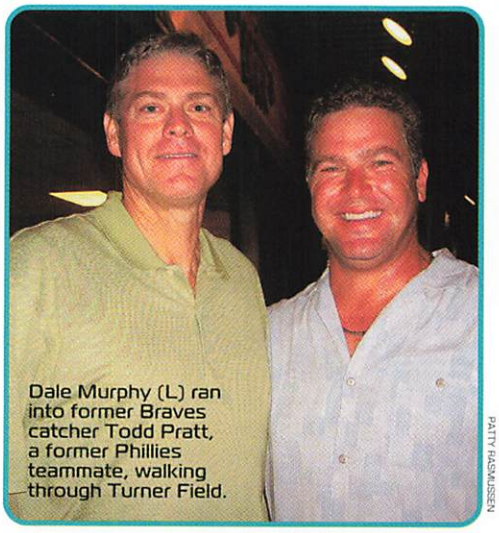
ON AUG. 1, the day **Mark Teixeira** made his Braves debut, **Andrew Hall** (23) and **Tyler Crawford** (20), students at nearby Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama, set pen to paper and wrote and recorded a humorous song about the newest Brave. The "Mark Teixeira Tribute" was posted on YouTube days later, where it quickly scored thousands of internet hits. The current hit count is well over 200,000.

"We were just goofing around," said Crawford. "We thought just our friends would see it."

Jeff Francoeur saw it and e-mailed the two, and the Braves invited Hall and Crawford to come to Turner Field on Aug. 30 to perform the song in the Fan Plaza and to meet Teixeira during batting practice.

"Everyone has been really great," said Hall. "We've heard from people all over the place, including a lot of Texas Rangers fans!"

To hear the tribute song, go to YouTube and search under "Mark Teixeira Tribute."



Dale Murphy (L) ran into former Braves catcher Todd Pratt, a former Phillies teammate, walking through Turner Field.

PATTY RASMUSSEN

Erin Woodward, wife of **Chris Woodward**, hosted a gathering of Braves wives and friends on Aug. 17 to meet **Haregewoin Teferra**, an Ethiopian woman who runs an orphanage near the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa. Haregewoin currently cares for 40 children, half of them HIV positive. Over a fantastic meal of Ethiopian food, provided by Erin, Haregewoin shared her story with wives **Kim Hudson**, **Liezel Yates**, **Leslee Diaz**, **Jessica Carlyle**, and fiancées **Lauren Thacker** (**Kelly Johnson**) and **Ashley Jarusinski** (**Brian McCann**). For more information on the work of Haregewoin, check out the website, thereisnomewithoutyou.com/thefostermother ...

Several weeks after hearing Haregowoin's story, **Jessica Carlyle** (**Buddy Carlyle**), found an opportunity for the Braves wives to create a fundraiser to benefit the Ethiopian orphanage. "The Cobb Sports Complex was celebrating their first anniversary and asked Buddy to sign autographs," she said. "Instead, we turned it into 'A Signature Event'." The event, which took place on Sept. 22, included a raffle, home run hitting contest, pitching challenge and other activities. The Cobb Sports Complex issued a Group/Business Donation Challenge to other members of the Cobb County business community. When a business donation was received, the company name was linked on the website (cobbsportscomplex.com). Wives sold raffle tickets that were used in exchange for Braves autographs. "The exciting thing is that all the money raised goes to the Illien Foundation for Children, Inc. (illienfoundation.org) to support the orphanage," said Jessica. In addition to the Carlyles, players and wives who participated in the event included **Tim** and **Kim Hudson**, **Chris** and **Erin Woodward**, **Tyler** and **Liezel**

Yates, **Lance** and **Jamie Cormier**, **Ron** and **Allison Mahay**, and **Brian** and **Ronnie Snitker**...

As **Dale Murphy** walked through the Turner Field concourse, going from book signing to interview, he saw a familiar face at a concession stand - former Phillies teammate and former Braves catcher, **Todd Pratt**. Pratt, who played with Murphy in 1992, also played for the Braves in 2006 before retiring. He lives in Douglasville, Ga., with his family...

It was great seeing **Mary Ann Sain**, wife of the late Braves Hall of Fame pitcher and coach, **Johnny Sain**, at the "wives table" for the Braves Hall of Fame luncheon Aug. 17. She was joined by **Rubye Lucas**, wife of the late Braves Hall of Fame executive **Bill Lucas**, **Petie Snyder**, wife of Braves Hall of Fame scouting guru **Paul Snyder**, **Nancy Niekro** (**Phil**), and broadcaster wives, **Lois Johnson** (Braves Hall of Famer **Ernie**), **Elaine Van Wieren** (Braves Hall of Famer **Pete**), and **Kathy Simpson** (**Joe**). Mary Ann cared for her husband, debilitated by a stroke in 2002, until his death in November 2006. She divides her time between a town home in Downers Grove, Ill., and the family farm in Arkansas...

Also attending the Braves Hall of Fame luncheon was **Mary Lou Burdette-Wieloszynski**, one of Lou Burdette's three daughters. Burdette, inducted into the Braves Hall of Fame in 2001, passed away in February. Mary Lou reported the news that her mother, **Mary**, also passed away in June, after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease...

Eddie Perez retrieved the ball hit by **Barry Bonds** when the Giants slugger homered at Turner Field on Aug. 15. The ball went between the outfield bleachers and the outfield wall. Perez and a member of the grounds crew made sure to fetch it so that fans wouldn't jump the wall in their quest for a piece of potential baseball history. Perez happily complied when Bonds requested the ball, and Bonds returned the favor by sending a bat, autographed - "To Eddie: God bless, Barry Bonds"...

John Smoltz was a featured speaker at the ceremony to dedicate the **Barbara Adler** Education Building at King's Ridge Christian School. Smoltz has been involved in the building of the school since it's beginning over nine years ago...

Though he and his family have moved to Arizona, **Mike Hampton** and his wife, **Kautia**, will continue to hold their annual December event, the Mike Hampton Pitching-In Foundation Family Fun Day held in their hometown of Homosassa Springs, Fla. This year's event includes a Dec. 1 country music concert held at Rock Crusher Canyon Amphitheater featuring **Trace Adkins** and Montgomery Gentry. Tickets are on sale through Ticketmaster...

Braves players and coaches met with **James Grandey**, coach of the Bluffton (Ohio) University baseball team. The Bluffton baseball team was involved in a March bus crash on I-75 in Atlanta. Five members of the team, as well as the driver and his wife, were killed in the accident. Several members of the team, including Grandey, remained in the hospital for weeks after the crash. Grandey and his wife, **Jessica**, and infant daughter, **Ayla**, were in Atlanta to visit the doctors and friends who took care of them. Grandey, his family and friends watched the game from the owner's box...

A new official scorer was recently added to the rotation at Turner Field. Longtime sports journalist **Jack Wilkinson** (see his story on **Jeff Francoeur** in this issue of ChopTalk) scored his first game July 31. He authored the book, "Game Of My Life: Atlanta Braves", which was released in April.

PATTY RASMUSSEN

From left Gino Emanuels, Kenneth Lee, Frannie Taysavang holding baby, Jai Taysavang, Liezel Yates, Marianne Chung and Charles Huong at the Chopstix for Charity event.

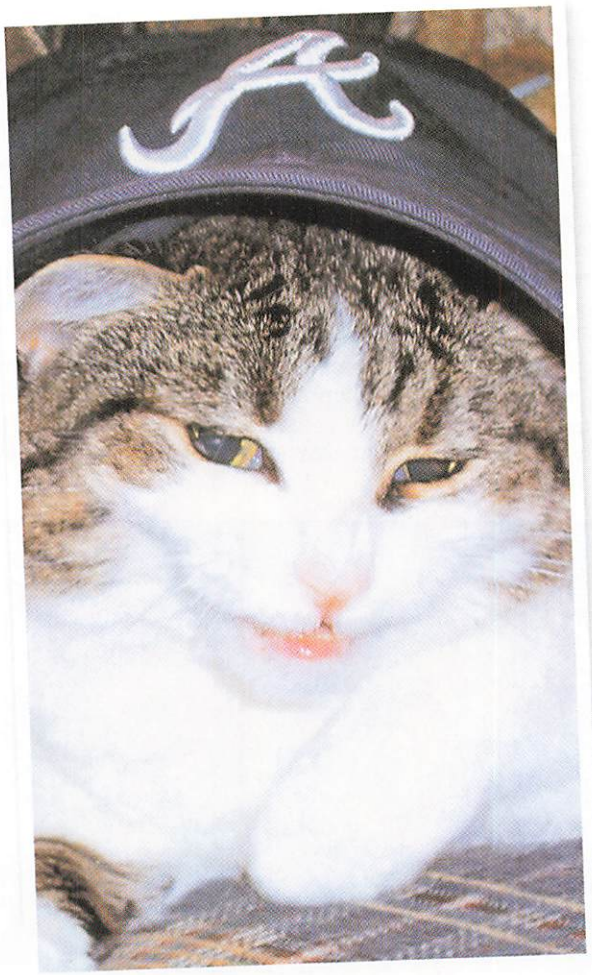
CHOPSTIX ANYONE?

LIEZEL YATES, wife of **Tyler Yates**, attended the sold-out 10th Annual Chopstix for Charity event, Aug. 18. Held in the atrium of the SunTrust building in downtown Atlanta, Chopstix for Charity (chopstixforcharity.org) is the primary fundraiser in support of Asian-American non-profit programs in Atlanta. Liezel was approached by event co-chair, **Frannie Taysavang**, at Baseball 101, an annual Braves sponsored clinic educating women on the finer points of baseball. Frannie, recognizing Liezel's obvious Asian ancestry, asked if she would like to be involved in the event. Liezel and Tyler provided several signed Braves collectibles, as well as a ticket package, for the silent and live auctions. The signed **Chipper Jones** bat went for $500 in an exciting live auction. The evening was filled with fantastic Asian cuisine, music and dancing.

TALKIN' CHOP

LETTERS & PHOTOS FROM OUR READERS

WHETHER YOU'RE HAVING FUN AT TURNER FIELD, EXPERIENCING A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH YOUR FAVORITE BRAVES PLAYER, OR JUST SHOWING OFF YOUR COLLECTION OF BRAVES STUFF OR TRYING ON YOUR NEW BRAVES SHIRT, WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT AND SEE A PICTURE.



THE CATS' MEOW

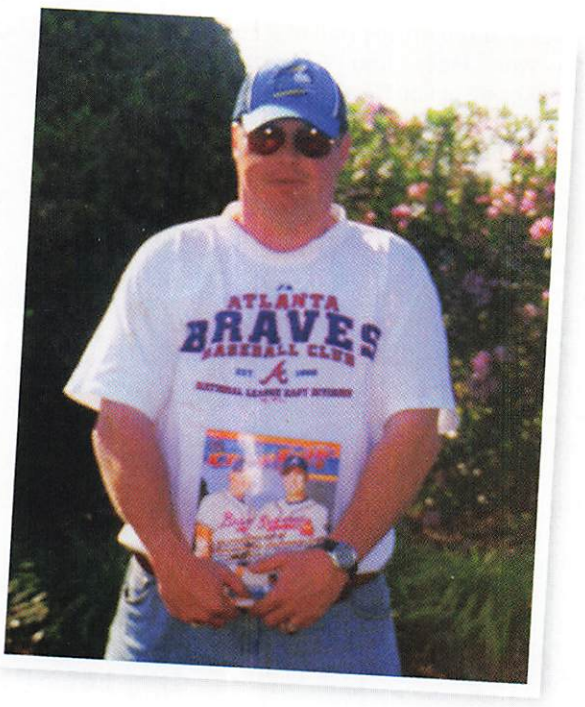
Three generations of our family enjoy watching and cheering for the Braves. We've also enjoyed ChopTalk for years. It helps us keep up with the players and coaches, and we especially enjoy the features on the personal lives of the players. One of our cats - Catzilla - really loves caps and the Braves, too. You can tell they just won when we took this picture. We have another cat, Buster, who comes running for treats when we ask if he wants "to play Andruw Jones." He jumps in the chair and catches treats in his mouth! We're a Braves family and really appreciate the work Bobby Cox does for homeless pets.

Yvonne Almeida
Greenville, S.C

SCOUTING THE PROSPECTS

I'm a big fan of the Myrtle Beach Pelicans and the Richmond Braves farm teams. Here I am waiting for the gates to open in Myrtle Beach for a game on Memorial Day weekend.

Michael Stone
Edenton, N.C.



CROSS TRAINING

I'm nine years old and have been a Braves fan all my life. My Maw Maw is, too. She's learning more about baseball, thanks to Baseball 101, and is trying to show me how to play. Maw Maw says she is training me to field like Andruw Jones, pitch like John Smoltz, and manage like Bobby Cox. Then she wants to change my name to Andruw John Cox. My parents say, "No!", but we'll keep trying.

Duncan Queen
Bessemer City, N.C

CHOPTALK AND THE ATLANTA BRAVES SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

LOYAL THREESOME

Three loyal, long-time Braves fans (ages 77 to 88) recently got together with their pastor, Mitchell Reaves, to watch an afternoon game. We can't get to Atlanta that often, but thanks to TV and radio, we don't miss a game. The Braves' broadcasters are the best! I look forward to my monthly ChopTalk, because it has such great news about all the players. Win or lose, they're still our team.

Irene Fogo
Chattanooga, Tenn.

A VOTE FOR CHIPPER

Some of my neighbors think that Derek Jeter is the best shortstop in the majors. Well, I want to nominate Chipper Jones as the best third baseman in the majors - even ahead of A-Rod (Alex Rodriguez)! I love the Braves and watch them every time they're on TV.

Eugenia Calk
Birmingham, Ala.

SHARE YOUR BRAVES FEVER!

WRITE TO US

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Atlanta Braves
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For the Braves players, Bobby Cox, the coaches, broadcasters, or members of the front office.

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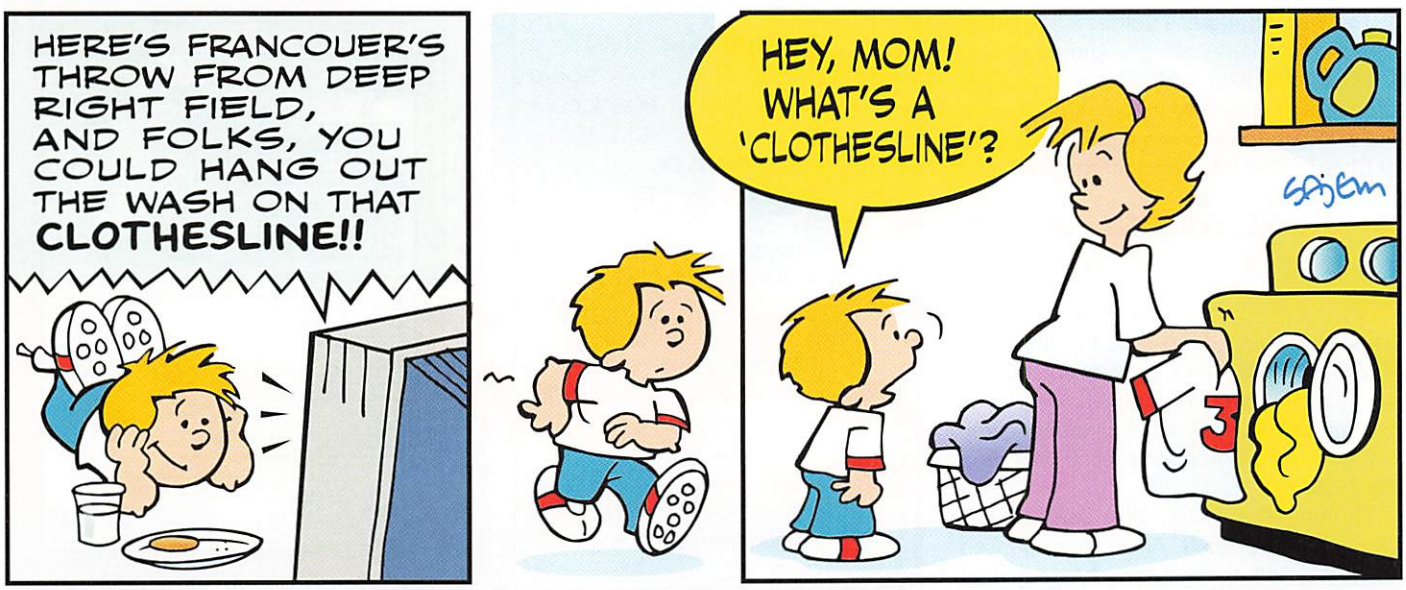
LAUNDRY LESSON


HERE'S FRANCOUER'S THROW FROM DEEP RIGHT FIELD, AND FOLKS, YOU COULD HANG OUT THE WASH ON THAT CLOTHESLINE!!
HEY, MOM! WHAT'S A 'CLOTHESLINE'?

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

THERE'S A NEW TWIST to Braves FanFest this year. It's moving from Turner Field to the Georgia World Congress Center, eliminating potential foul weather from the equation and providing a large venue to accommodate more activities.

Though details are minimal at this point, the date is locked in: Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 12-13. The Saturday session is from 10 a.m.-6 p.m., and the Sunday session is 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Typically, FanFest includes player appearances and autograph opportunities, along with games and activities for the entire family. Exactly how the new FanFest will shake down remains to be seen. The Braves will be producing it along with Urban Expositions. Plans call for an Atlanta Baseball Players Show & Conference to be part of the experience. Equipment manufacturers, training aids, and camps are likely to be exhibitors, along with baseball memorabilia dealers and much more.

The World Congress Center is located in downtown Atlanta at 285 Andrew Young International Blvd., adjacent to the CNN Center and only two miles from Turner Field. Watch Braves.com and future issues of ChopTalk for additional information.

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT: RECORD 14,000 NAMES!

LONG BEFORE there were rotisserie baseball leagues, there was the American Professional Baseball Association, a group of guys from Lancaster, Pa., who developed and played a baseball simulation game using the names of real baseball players in the 1930s.

Through the years, the "association" began calling itself APBA (pronounced AppBah), and though the company that grew out of the original game now markets other sports games, to die-hard APBA players, like Pete Van Wieren who grew up playing it, the first love will always be the baseball board game.

Baseball for Windows, introduced by APBA in 1984, has been such a successful version of the game that it's undergoing another revision. And to the delight of Van Wieren, he was asked to become the voice of APBA's Baseball for Windows 6.0.

"I was thrilled to be asked," said Van Wieren, who is in his 32nd season of broadcasting Braves games and was inducted into the franchise Hall of Fame in 2004, "especially since I grew up playing the board game version. It is also an honor to be chosen to succeed (former Detroit Tigers broadcaster) Ernie Harwell, who has been the voice of the computer version since 1993."

Marc Rinaldi, president of APBA Games, is enthusiastic about bringing Van Wieren on board.

"Part of our interest in him is that he was a long-time APBA player and is familiar with the board game," said Rinaldi. "But there's a respect and likeability factor to Pete's voice, too."

Baseball for Windows hadn't been updated in 10 years, and Van Wieren will go into the studio at the end of the baseball season to begin recording the first and last name of every player in history - some 14,000 - including Japanese and Latin players. He'll also record "catch phrases" used in the game. Rinaldi says he hopes to have the 6.0 version done by the beginning of the 2008 season.

- PATTY RASMUSSEN

GLAD YOU ASKED

KELLY JOHNSON
FAVORITE TV SHOW: 24
FAVORITE WEBSITE: ESPN.COM
TICKLISH: YES
SPORTS EVENT YOU'D LIKE TO ATTEND: KENTUCKY DERBY

BRIAN McCANN
LEAST FAVORITE EXERCISE: SQUATS
FAVORITE WEBSITE: BREAK.COM
CAR YOU WANT TO TEST DRIVE: BENTLEY.
TICKLISH? YES.
SPORT YOU WANT TO ATTEND: ULTIMATE FIGHTING
FAVORITE TV SHOW: 24.

TYLER YATES
LEAST FAVORITE EXERCISE: ABS
CAR YOU'D LIKE TO TEST DRIVE: ASTON MARTIN
FAVORITE TV SHOW: PRISON BREAK
CELEB WHO MAKES YOU CRINGE: BRITNEY SPEARS

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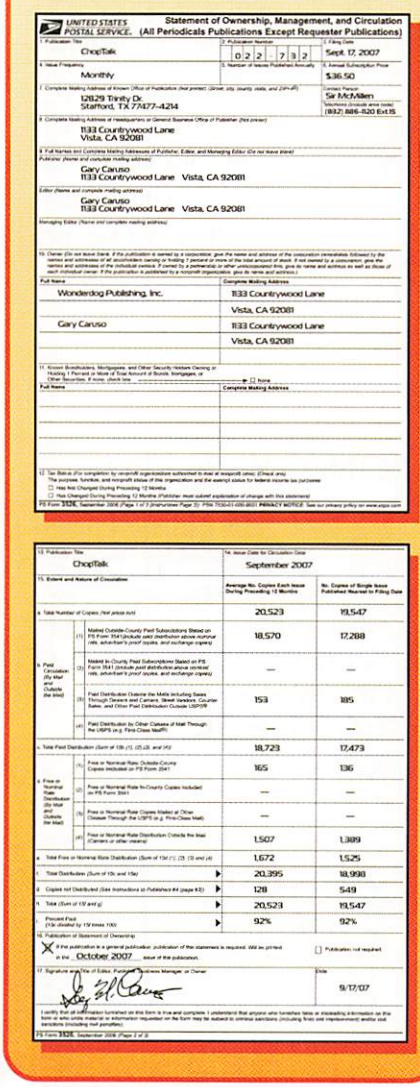

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g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))	128	549
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)	20,523	19,547
i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)	92%	92%

16. Publication of Statement of Ownership
☒ If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the October 2007 issue of this publication. ☐ Publication not required.

17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner — Date: 9/17/07

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including multiple penalties).

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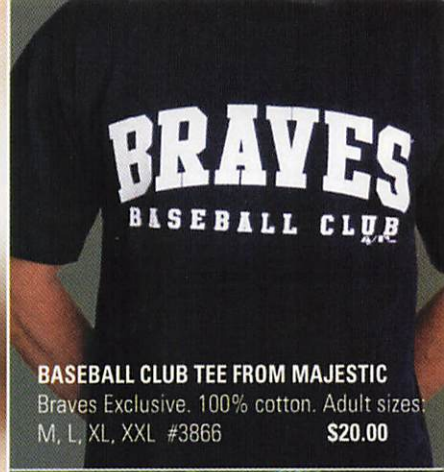

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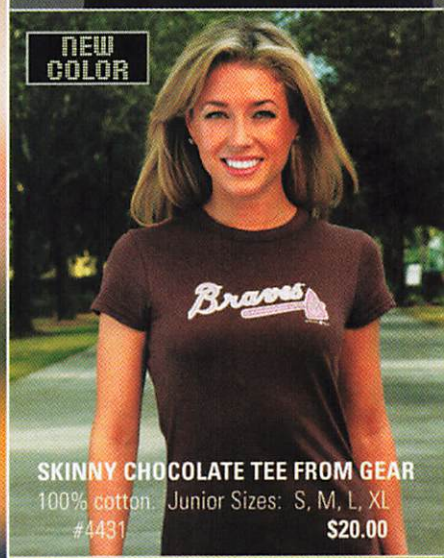

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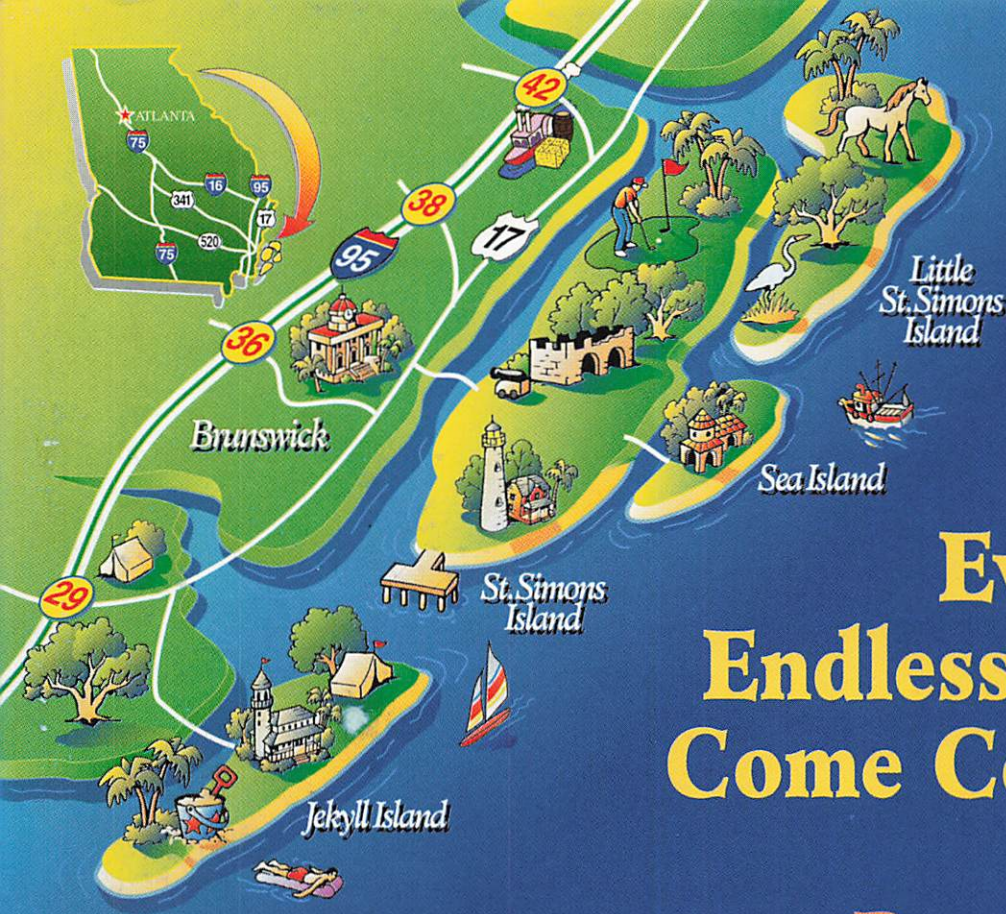

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